UC-NRLF
$B 267 064

RIVERSIDE BIOGRAPHICAL SERIES

# BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

by

P. E. MORE

LIBRARY
OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

*Class*

## The Riverside Biographical Series

1. ANDREW JACKSON, by W. G. Brown.
2. JAMES B. EADS, by Louis How.
3. BENJAMIN FRANKLIN, by Paul E. More.
4. PETER COOPER, by R. W. Raymond.
5. THOMAS JEFFERSON, by H. C. Merwin.
6. WILLIAM PENN, by George Hodges.
7. GENERAL GRANT, by Walter Allen.
8. LEWIS AND CLARK, by William R. Lighton.
9. JOHN MARSHALL, by James B. Thayer.
10. ALEXANDER HAMILTON, by Chas. A. Conant.
11. WASHINGTON IRVING, by H. W. Boynton.
12. PAUL JONES, by Hutchins Hapgood.
13. STEPHEN A. DOUGLAS, by W. G. Brown.
14. SAMUEL DE CHAMPLAIN, by H. D. Sedgwick, Jr.

Each about 140 pages, 16mo, with photogravure portrait, 65 cents, *net*; *School Edition*, each, 50 cents, *net*.

HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY
Boston and New York

The Riverside Biographical Series

NUMBER 3

# BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

BY

PAUL ELMER MORE

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

Benj. Franklin

# BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

BY

PAUL ELMER MORE

BOSTON AND NEW YORK
HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY
The Riverside Press Cambridge

E302
.F8M7

COPYRIGHT, 1900, BY PAUL E. MORE
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

TO VIAU
CALIFORNIA

# CONTENTS


| CHAP. | | PAGE |
|---|---|---|
| I. | Early Days in Boston . . . . . | 1 |
| II. | Beginnings in Philadelphia and First Voyage to England . . . . . | 22 |
| III. | Religious Beliefs. — The Junto . . | 37 |
| IV. | The Scientist and Public Citizen in Philadelphia . . . . . | 52 |
| V. | First and Second Missions to England . | 85 |
| VI. | Member of Congress — Envoy to France | 109 |


227629

# BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

## I

### EARLY DAYS IN BOSTON

When the report of Franklin's death reached Paris, he received, among other marks of respect, this significant honor by one of the revolutionary clubs: in the café where the members met, his bust was crowned with oak-leaves, and on the pedestal below was engraved the single word VIR. This simple encomium, calling to mind Napoleon's *This is a man* after meeting Goethe, sums up better than a volume of eulogy what Franklin was in his own day and what his life may still signify to us. He acted at one time as a commander of troops, yet cannot be called a soldier; he was a great statesman, yet not among the greatest; he made famous discoveries in science, yet was scarcely

a professional scientist; he was lauded as a philosopher, yet barely outstepped the region of common sense; he wrote ever as a moralist, yet in some respects lived a free life; he is one of the few great American authors, yet never published a book; he was a shrewd economist, yet left at his death only a moderate fortune; he accomplished much as a philanthropist, yet never sacrificed his own weal. Above all and in all things he was a man, able to cope with every chance of life and wring profit out of it; he had perhaps the alertest mind of any man of that alert century. In his shrewdness, versatility, self-reliance, wit, as also in his lack of the deeper reverence and imagination, he, I think, more than any other man who has yet lived, represents the full American character. And so in studying his life, though at times we may wish that to his practical intelligence were added the fervid insight of Jonathan Edwards, who was his only intellectual equal in the colonies, or the serene faith of an Emerson, who was born "within a kite string's distance" of his birthplace in Bos-

ton, yet in the end we are borne away by the wonderful openness and rectitude of his mind, and are willing to grant him his high representative position.

Franklin's ancestors were of the sturdy sort that have made the strength of the Anglo-Saxon race. For three hundred years at least his family had lived on a freehold of thirty acres in the village of Ecton, Northamptonshire; and for many generations father and son had been smiths. Parton, in his capital Life of Franklin, has observed that Washington's ancestors lived in the same county, although much higher in the social scale; and it may well have been that more than one of Franklin's ancestors "tightened a rivet in the armor or replaced a shoe upon the horse of a Washington, or doffed his cap to a Washington riding past the ancestral forge." During these long years the family seems to have gathered strength from the soil, as families are wont to do. Seeing how the Franklins, when the fit of emigrating seized upon them, blossomed out momentarily, and then dwindled away, we are

reminded of Poor Richard's wise observation, —

> "I never saw an oft-removëd tree
> Nor yet an oft-removëd family
> That throve so well as those that settled be."

About the year 1685, Josiah Franklin, the youngest of four sons, came with his wife and three children to Boston. He had been a dyer in the old home, but now in New England, finding little to be done in this line, he set up as a tallow-chandler and soap-boiler, and prospered in a small way. By his first wife he had four more children, and then by a second wife ten others, — a goodly sheaf of seventeen, among whom Benjamin, the destined philosopher, was the fifteenth.

The second wife, Benjamin's mother, was the daughter of Peter Folger, one of the settlers of Nantucket, — "a godly and learned Englishman," who, like many of the pious New England folk, used to relieve his heart in doggerel rhymes. In his "Looking-Glass for the Times" he appeals boldly for liberty of conscience in behalf of the persecuted

Anabaptists and Quakers, and we are not surprised that Franklin should have commended the manly freedom of these crude verses. Young Benjamin was open to every influence about him, and something of the large and immovable tolerance of his nature may have been caught from old Peter Folger, his grandfather. We can imagine with what relish that sturdy Protestant, if he had lived so long, would have received Benjamin's famous "Parable against Persecution," which the author used to pretend to read as the last chapter of Genesis, to the great mystification of his audience, — "And it came to pass after these things that Abraham sat in the door of his tent," etc. Try the trick to-day, and you will find most of your hearers equally mystified, so perfectly has Franklin imitated the tone of Old Testament language.

But we forget that our hero, like Tristram Shandy, is still in the limbo of non-existence. Benjamin Franklin was born in Boston, January 6 (old style), 1706. At that time the family home was in Milk Street, opposite

the Old South Church, to which sacred edifice the child was taken the day of his birth, tradition asserting that his own mother carried him thither through the snow. Shortly afterwards the family moved to a wooden house on the corner of Hanover and Union streets.

Naturally in so large a family, where the means of support were so slender, young Benjamin had to get most of his education outside of the schoolroom, and something of this practical unscholastic training clung to his mind always. Perhaps this was just as well in that age and place, where theology and education were synonymous terms. Certainly his consequent lack of deep root in the past and his impressionability, though limitations to his genius, make him the more typical of American intelligence. At the age of eight he was sent to the grammar school, where he remained less than a year, and then passed under the charge of Mr. George Brownell, a teacher of the three R's. Benjamin had learned to read so young that he himself could not remember being unable

to read, and at school he did notably well. It is curious, however, that he found difficulty with his arithmetic, and was never a mathematician, though later in life he became skillful in dealing with figures. No error could be greater than Carlyle's statement that ability in mathematics is a test of intelligence. Goethe, scientist as well as poet, could never learn algebra; and Faraday, the creator of electrical science, knew no mathematics at all.

When ten years old the lad was taken from school and set to work under his father. But his education was by no means ended. There is a temptation to dwell on these early formative years because he himself was so fond of deducing lessons from the little occurrences of his boyhood; nor do I know any life that shows a more consistent development from beginning to end. There is, too, a peculiar charm in hearing the world-famous philosopher discourse on these petty happenings of childhood and draw from them his wise experience of life. So, for instance, at sixty-six years of age he writes to a friend

in Paris the story of "The Whistle." One day when he was seven years old his pocket was filled with coppers, and he immediately started for the shop to buy toys. On the way he met a boy with a whistle, and was so charmed with the sound of it that he gave all his money for one. Of course his kind brothers and sisters laughed at him for his extravagant bargain, and his chagrin was so great that he adopted as one of his maxims of life, "Don't give too much for the whistle." As he grew up, came into the world, and observed the actions of men, he thought he met with many, very many, who gave too much for the whistle, — men sacrificing time and liberty and virtue for court favor; misers, giving up comfort and esteem and the joy of doing good for wealth; others sacrificing every laudable improvement of the mind and fortune and health to mere corporal sensations, and all the other follies of exorbitant desire.

Another experience, this time a more painful lesson in honesty, he relates in his Autobiography. Having one day stolen some

stones from an unfinished house while the builders were away, he and his comrades built up a wharf where they might stand and fish for minnows in the mill-pond. They were discovered, complained of, and corrected by their fathers; "and though I demonstrated the utility of our work," says Franklin, "mine convinced me that that which was not honest could not be truly useful."

It is interesting, too, to see the boy showing the same experimental aptitude which brought scientific renown to the man. Like all American boys living on the coast, he was strongly attracted to the water, and early learned to swim. But ordinary swimming was not enough for Benjamin: with some skill he made a pair of wooden paddles for his hands, which enabled him to move through the water very rapidly, although, as he says, they tired his wrists. Another time he combined the two joyful pursuits of swimming and kite-flying in such a manner perhaps as no boy before him had ever conceived. Lying on his back, he held in his hands the stick to which the kite-string was attached,

and thus "was drawn along the surface of the water in a very agreeable manner." Later in life he said he thought it not impossible to cross in this manner from Dover to Calais. "But the packet-boat is still preferable," he added. We shall see how he managed to put even his knowledge of swimming to practical use; and kite-flying, every one knows, served him in his most notable electrical experiment. Certainly, if it could ever be said of any one, it might be said of him, "The child is father of the man."

But swimming and boyish play formed a small, though it may be important, part of his education. He was from childhood up "passionately fond of reading," and he was moreover a wise reader, which is still better. Books were not so easy to get in those days; and the good libraries of the country were composed chiefly of great theological volumes in folio on the shelves of the clergymen's studies. But in one way and another Franklin contrived to lay hands on the food he most needed. All the money he could

save he devoted to buying books, and he even had recourse to unusual methods of saving for this purpose. When sixteen he chanced to read a treatise commending a vegetable diet, and forthwith he put himself under this regimen, finding he could thus set aside half his board money to increase his library. He also made the acquaintance of the booksellers' apprentices from whom he could borrow books; and often he would read late into the night so as to return the purloined volume early the next morning.

The first book he owned was the "Pilgrim's Progress," which remained a favorite with him through life and even served to a certain extent as a model for his own work. This book he sold to buy Burton's "Historical Collections" in forty volumes. His father's library was mainly theological, and the young lad was courageous enough to browse even in this dry pasture, but to his little profit as he thought. There was, however, a book on his father's shelves which was admirably suited to train one destined himself to play a large part in a great drama

of history. Where could patriotism and fortitude of character better be learnt than in Plutarch? and Plutarch he read "abundantly" and thought his "time spent to great advantage." That was in the good days before children's books and boys' books were printed. In place of — whom shall we say, Henty or Abbott or another? — boys, if they read at all, read Plutarch and the "Spectator." They came to the intellectual tasks of manhood with their minds braced by manly reading and not deboshed by silly or at best juvenile literature. It is safe to say that no book written primarily for a boy is a good book for a boy to read. Apart from lessons in generous living, Franklin may have had his natural tendency to moralize strengthened by this study of Plutarch. It is indeed notable that in one respect eighteenth-century literature has marked affinity with the Greek. The writers of that age, and among them Franklin, were like the Greeks distinctly ethical. In telling a story or recording a life, their interest was in the moral to be drawn, rather than in the passions involved.

Another book which had a special influence on his style may be mentioned. An odd volume of the "Spectator" coming into his hands, he read the essays over and over and took them deliberately as a model in language. This was before the date of Johnson's well-known dictum: "Whoever wishes to attain an English style, familiar but not coarse, and elegant but not ostentatious, must give his days and nights to the volumes of Addison." His method of work was "to make short hints of the sentiments in each sentence," lay these by for a few days, and then having reconstructed the essay from his notes to compare his version with the original. Sometimes he jumbled the collection of hints into confusion and thus made a study of construction as well as of style; or again he turned an essay into verse and after a while converted it back into prose. And this we believe to be the true method of acquiring a good style, more efficacious than any English course in Harvard College.

At sixteen he was reading Locke "On

Human Understanding," — very strong meat for a boy — and the Port Royal "Art of Thinking." From Xenophon's "Memorable Things of Socrates" he acquired a lesson which he never forgot and which he always esteemed of importance in his education. This was the skillful assumption of ignorance or uncertainty in dispute, the so-called "irony" of Socrates. At first he employed this ironical method to trap his opponents into making unwary statements that led to their confusion; and in this way he grew expert in obtaining victories that, as he said, neither he nor his cause deserved. Accordingly he afterwards gave up this form of sophistry and only retained the habit of expressing himself in terms of modest diffidence, always saying: He conceived or imagined such a thing to be so, and never using the words *certainly*, *undoubtedly*, and the like.

Books, however, occupied but a small part of his life at this time. After leaving school he was first made to assist his father in the tallow-chandler business; but his distaste for

this trade was so great that his father, fearing the boy would run away to sea, began to look about for other employment for him. He took the lad to see "joiners, brick-layers, turners, braziers, etc., at their work," in order to discover where the boy's inclination lay. And this event of his boyhood he as an old man remembered, saying, that it had ever since been a pleasure to him to see good workmen handle their tools, and adding that it was useful to him in his business and science to have learned so much in the way of handicraft. At length Benjamin's love of books determined his occupation, and like many another famous author he was set to the printing-press. In 1717 his brother James had come back from England with a press and letters, and at the age of twelve Benjamin was bound to his brother as an apprentice.

James soon discovered Benjamin's cleverness with the pen and induced him to compose two ballads, "The Light-House Tragedy," being the story of a recent shipwreck, and "Blackbeard," a sailor's song on the

capture of that notorious pirate. These ballads, which the author frankly, and no doubt truthfully, describes as "wretched stuff," were printed and hawked about the streets by the boy. "The Light-House Tragedy" at least sold prodigiously, and the boy's vanity was correspondingly flattered; but the father stepped in and discouraged such work, warning Benjamin that "verse-makers were generally beggars." So, perhaps, we were spared a mediocre poet and given a first-rate prose writer, for the stuff of poetry was not in Franklin's sober brain.

At this time the good people of Massachusetts were dependent for the news of the world on a single paper, the "Boston News-Letter," afterwards called the "Gazette" (and indeed there was no other paper in the whole country), published, as was commonly the case in those days, by the postmaster of the town. But in 1721 James Franklin, much against the advice of his friends, started a rival paper, the "New England Courant," which the young apprentice had to carry about to subscribers after helping it

through the press. Benjamin, however, soon played a more important part than printer's devil. Several ingenious men were in the habit of writing little Addisonian essays for the paper, and Benjamin, hearing their conversation, was fired to try his own skill. "But being still a boy," — so he tells the story himself, — "and suspecting that my brother would object to printing anything of mine in his paper if he knew it to be mine, I contrived to disguise my hand, and writing an anonymous paper, I put it at night under the door of the printing-house. It was found in the morning and communicated to his writing friends when they called in as usual. They read it, commented on it in my hearing, and I had the exquisite pleasure of finding it met with their approbation, and that in their different guesses at the author none were named but men of some character among us for learning and ingenuity." Naturally the lad was flattered by the success of his ruse; and he continued to send in his anonymous essays for more than a year. They have been pretty conclusively

identified as the series of articles signed "Silence Dogood," and are a clever enough imitation of the "Spectator's" style of allegory and humorous satire, such as Franklin was fond of using all his life. The signature, too, Silence Dogood, was characteristic of the man who turned all religion into a code of morality, and was famous for his power of keeping a secret. Like the ancient poet Simonides, he knew the truth of the saying, *Silence hath a safe reward.*

Those days were not easy times for printers, nor was the freedom of the press any more respected than liberty of conscience. Trouble very soon arose between the new paper and the authorities chiefly on account of the "Courant's" free handling of the church. Already the free-thinking party which afterwards formed into the Unitarian church was showing its head, and the writers for the "Courant" were among the most outspoken. The climax was reached when one day the paper appeared with a diatribe containing such words as these: "For my own part, when I find a man full of religious

cant and palaver, I presently suspect him to be a knave," — a sentiment which the religious authorities very properly took as an insult to themselves. James was arrested and imprisoned for a month, and on his release was forbidden to print the "Courant." To escape this difficulty the old indenture of Benjamin was canceled and the paper was printed in his name; at the same time, however, a new indenture was secretly made so that James might still, if he desired, claim his legal rights in the apprentice. It was a "flimsy scheme," and held but a little while.

Bickerings had been constant between the two brothers, and Benjamin was especially resentful for the blows his master's passion too often urged him to bestow.

> "My mind now is set,
> My heart's thought, on wide waters," —

said the youth in the old Anglo-Saxon poem, and this same sea-longing was bred in the bones of our Boston apprentice. Now at length the boy would break away; at least he would voyage to another home, though he might give up the notion of becoming a

sailor. He intimates, moreover, that the narrow bigotry of New England in religion was distasteful to him — as we may well believe it was. Yet he always retained an affectionate memory of the place of his birth; and only two years before his death he wrote pleasantly regarding the citizens of that town, "for besides their general good sense, which I value, the Boston manner, turn of phrase, and even tone of voice and accent in pronunciation, all please and seem to refresh and revive me." The newspapers of those days were full of advertisements for runaway apprentices, and Benjamin was one to get his freedom in the same way. He sold his books for a little cash, took secret passage in a sloop for New York, and in three days (some time in October, 1723) found himself in that strange city "without the least recommendation or knowledge of anybody in the place." The voyage had been uneventful save for an incident which happened while they were becalmed off Block Island. The crew here employed themselves in catching cod, and to Franklin, at this time a

devout vegetarian, the taking of every fish seemed a kind of unprovoked murder, since none of them had done or could do their catchers any injury. But he had been formerly a great lover of fish, and the smell of the frying-pan was most tempting. He balanced some time between principle and inclination, till, recollecting that when the fish were opened he had seen smaller fish taken out of their stomachs, he bethought himself: "If you eat one another I don't see why we may not eat you;" so he dined upon cod very heartily, and continued through life, except at rare intervals, to eat as other people. "So convenient a thing it is," he adds, "to be a reasonable creature, since it enables one to find or make a reason for everything one has a mind to do."

## II

### BEGINNINGS IN PHILADELPHIA AND FIRST VOYAGE TO ENGLAND

THE only printer then in New York was old William Bradford, formerly of Philadelphia, whose monument may still be seen in Trinity Churchyard. To Mr. William Bradford accordingly young Franklin applied for work; but there was little printing done in the town and Bradford had no need of another hand at the press. He told Franklin, however, that his son at Philadelphia had lately lost his principal assistant by death, and advised Franklin to go thither.

Without delay Franklin set out for that place, and after a somewhat adventurous journey arrived at the Market Street wharf about eight or nine o'clock of a Sunday morning.

Philadelphia at that time was a comfortable town of some ten thousand inhabitants,

extending a mile or more along the Delaware and reaching only a few blocks back into the country. It was a shady easy-going place, with pleasant gardens about the houses, and something of Quaker repose and substantial thrift lent a charm to its busy life. Men were still living who could remember when unbroken forests held the place of Penn's city : —

"And the streets still reëcho the names of the trees of the forest,
As if they fain would appease the Dryads whose haunts they molested."

Franklin was fond of contrasting his humble entrance into his adopted home with the honorable station he afterwards acquired there. He was, as he says, in his working dress, his best clothes coming round by sea. He was dirty from being so long in the boat. His pockets were stuffed out with shirts and stockings, and he knew no one nor where to look for lodging. Fatigued with walking, rowing, and the want of sleep, he was very hungry ; and his whole stock of cash consisted in a single dollar and about a shil-

ling in copper coin, which he gave to the boatmen for his passage. At first they refused it on account of his having rowed, but he insisted on their taking it. "Man is sometimes," he adds, "more generous when he has little money than when he has plenty; perhaps to prevent his being thought to have but little."

It was indeed a strange entrance for the future statesman and scientist. As he walked up to Market Street he met a boy with bread, which reminded him forcibly of his hunger, and asking the boy where he had got his loaf he went straight to the same baker's. Here, after some difficulty due to difference of names in Boston and Philadelphia, he provided himself with three "great puffy rolls" for threepence, and with these he started up Market Street, eating one and carrying one under each arm, as his pockets were already full. On the way he passed the door of Mr. Read's house, where his future wife saw him and thought he made an awkward, ridiculous appearance. At Fourth Street he turned across to Chestnut and

walked down Chestnut and Walnut, munching his roll all the way. Coming again to the river he took a drink of water, gave away the two remaining rolls to a poor woman, and started up Market Street again. He found a number of clean-dressed people all going in one direction, and by following them was led into the great meeting-house of the Quakers. There he sat down and looked about him. It was apparently a silent meeting, for not a word was spoken, and the boy, being now utterly exhausted, fell into a sleep from which he was roused only at the close of the service.

That night he lodged at the Crooked Billet, which despite its ominous name seems to have been a comfortable inn, and the next morning, having dressed as neatly as he could, set out to find employment. Andrew Bradford had no place for him; but another printer named Keimer, who had recently set up in business, was willing to give him work. It was a queer house and a queer printer. There was an old damaged press, on which Franklin exercised his skill in re-

pairing, and a small worn-out font of type. Keimer himself, who seems to have been a grotesque compound of knave and crank, was engaged at once in composing and setting up in type an elegy on the death of a prominent young man. He is the only poet to my knowledge who ever used the composition-stick instead of a pen for the vehicle of inspiration. The elegy may still be read in Duyckinck's Cyclopædia, and on perusing it we may well repeat the first line : —

"What mournful accents thus accost mine ear ! "

Now began a period of growing prosperity for our philosopher. The two printers of Philadelphia were poorly qualified for their business, and Franklin by his industry and intelligence soon rendered himself indispensable to Keimer. He was making money, had discovered a few agreeable persons to pass his evenings with, and was contented. He took lodging with Mr. Read, and now, as he says, "made rather a more respectable appearance in the eyes of Miss Read."

He was even in a fair way to forget Boston when an incident occurred of some importance

in his life. Robert Holmes, who had married his sister, being at Newcastle, forty miles below Philadelphia, heard of him and wrote entreating him to return home. To this appeal Franklin replied giving his reasons for leaving Boston. Now Sir William Keith, governor of Pennsylvania, chanced at this time to be at Newcastle, and, being shown the letter by Holmes, was so much impressed with it that he determined to offer encouragement to the writer. Great, then, was the surprise of Benjamin and his master when one day the governor and another gentleman in their fine clothes called at the printing-house and inquired for the young man. They took him to a tavern at the corner of Third Street, and there over the Madeira the governor proposed that Benjamin should start an independent shop, promising in this case to give him the government printing. Benjamin was skeptical, but at last it was decided that he should go to Boston and seek help of his father; and in April, 1724, with a flattering letter from the governor, he set out for his old home. Benja-

min's father, however, though pleased by the governor's approval, thought the boy too young to assume so much responsibility, and sent him back to Philadelphia with no money, but with his blessing and abundant good counsel, advising him to restrain his natural tendency to lampoon, and telling him that by steady industry and prudent parismony he might save enough by the time he was twenty-one to set himself up, and withal promising help if he came near the matter.

The return voyage was unimportant save for an amusing incident which showed Franklin's innocence at that time whatever he may have been later on, and for an agreement he made to collect a debt of thirty-five pounds in Pennsylvania for one Vernon, — an agreement which was to cost him considerable anxiety. While stopping in New York, too, his reputation as a reader got him an invitation to visit Governor Burnet, who showed him his library and conversed with him on books and authors. "This," as Franklin observes, "was the second governor who had done me the honor to take notice of me, and

for a poor boy like me it was very pleasing."

In New York he had picked up his old friend Collins, a companion of his childhood, who had preceded him from Boston. Collins had passed from license of belief to license of morals, and was now besotting himself with drink. On the way to Philadelphia Franklin had collected the money due to Vernon, and Collins pressed him until he drew largely on this sum to help the spendthrift. Franklin regarded this as one of the chief *errata* of his life, and would have repented his error still more seriously perhaps if Vernon had not allowed him time to make good the defalcation. It was some five years before he was able to restore the money, and then, having paid both principal and interest, he felt a load taken off his mind.

His association with Collins came to an amusing end. Once when they were on the Delaware with some other young men, Collins refused to row in his turn. "I will be rowed home," said he. "We will not row

you," said Franklin. "You must," said he, "or stay all night on the water, just as you please." The others were willing to indulge him, but Franklin, being soured with his other conduct, continued to refuse. Collins swore he would make Franklin row or throw him overboard, and came along stepping on the thwarts to carry out his threat. But he mistook his man. Franklin clapped his head under the fellow's thighs and, rising, pitched him headforemost into the river. Collins was a good swimmer, but they kept him pulling after the boat until he was stifled with vexation and almost drowned. And that was the end of the friendship between the two. Collins later went to the Barbadoes, that limbo of the unsuccessful in colonial days, and Franklin never heard of him again.

With his employer, Keimer, Franklin had little sympathy, despising both his knavery and his false enthusiasms. Keimer wore his beard at full length, because somewhere in the Mosaic law it is said, "Thou shalt not mar the corners of thy beard." He likewise kept the seventh day

Sabbath. Franklin disliked both practices, but agreed to them on condition of their adopting a vegetarian diet, this whim suiting him at the time, both because he could save money by it and because he wished to give himself some diversion in half starving the gluttonous fanatic. Poor Keimer suffered grievously, grew tired of the project in three months, longed for the fleshpots of Egypt, and ordered a roast pig. He invited Franklin and two women friends to dine with him; but the pig being brought too soon upon the table, he could not resist the temptation, and ate the whole before his guests came.

Having to do with such a man, Franklin was very glad to accept Sir William Keith's offer to set him up alone. It was agreed that Franklin should sail to London, with letters of introduction, and also with letters of credit for purchasing press, types, paper, and such like. But for one reason and another the governor delayed writing the letters, and at last Franklin actually found himself afloat and on the way to London without a word from his patron. Great was

his chagrin when he learned during the passage that it was a habit of this amiable magistrate to promise anything and perform nothing. Franklin's comment on the occasion displays the imperturbable justice of his mind: "But what shall we think of a governor playing such pitiful tricks and imposing so grossly on a poor ignorant boy! It was a habit he had acquired. He wished to please everybody, and having little to give he gave expectations. He was otherwise an ingenious, sensible man, a pretty good writer, and a good governor for the people, though not for his constituents, the proprietaries."

Franklin reached London December 24, 1724, and remained there some nineteen months, doing many things and learning many things during this time that were of use to him in after life. But interesting as his experiences were, we pass over them with a few words. Without difficulty he got work with the printers, and employed his time industriously — of that there could be no doubt. As always, his head was full of

plans of economy; and we are amused to see him carry his reforms into the printing chapel, attempting to persuade the men to give up their expensive beer and take to hot-water gruel.

But though Franklin was always industrious, he was far from leading a confined life. Then as ever he mixed much with men, and his experience in London added largely no doubt to his knowledge of human nature. He even saw something of the ways of Grub Street through his friend Ralph, who had come with him from Philadelphia. "This low writer," as Pope called him, is now remembered only for a couple of vicious lines in the Dunciad, and for the ignominious part he plays in Franklin's Autobiography. For many months he was a continual drain on Franklin's pocket, and seems to have been the boy's evil genius in immorality as well.

Another acquaintance introduced him to a phase of character quite new to the youth from America. This was an old maiden lady of seventy, who occupied the garret of his

lodging house. She was a Roman Catholic, and lived the secluded life of a nun, having given away to charities all her estate except twelve pounds a year, out of which small sum she still gave a part, living herself on water gruel only, and using no fire but to boil it. Franklin was permitted to visit her once, and remarks that she was cheerful and polite, as also that the room was almost without furniture. "She looked pale," he says, "but was never sick; and I give it as another instance on how small an income life and health may be supported." — Not another word! Ah, Doctor Franklin, you were very wise in this world's wisdom! Your life was for a young struggling nation a splendid example of probity and thrift and self-culture. And yet we think your countrymen could wish you had used this poor enthusiast's folly as something else than a mere lesson in economy.

But the religious imagination played a small part in our philosopher's life, and least of all was it active in these London days. His skepticism in fact became acute, and

sought relief in public expression. As a compositor Franklin was engaged in setting up one of the many religious treatises then pouring out against the deists, and as the author's arguments seemed insufficient to the young reasoner, he wrote and printed a rejoinder. This is the pamphlet called "A Dissertation on Liberty and Necessity, Pleasure and Pain," which he inscribed to his friend Ralph, and whose printing he afterwards regretted as one of the *errata* of his life. It is a disquisition quite after the manner of the day, and, though it has no permanent value, is nevertheless a most unusual production for a boy of nineteen. He accepts the belief in a God and an all-powerful Providence, and argues thence the complete absence of free will in man; pleasure and pain are necessary correlatives, and cannot exist apart; the soul is perhaps immortal, but loses its personal identity at death.

It was time for Franklin to come home and prepare for the great work before him. He was indeed ready to come when his skill

in swimming almost lost him to this country. He had made such an impression by his feats in the water that one of his friends and pupils in the art proposed they should travel over Europe together, and support themselves by giving exhibitions. Fortunately Mr. Denham, an older and wiser friend, persuaded Franklin to return with him to America.

## III

### RELIGIOUS BELIEFS. — THE JUNTO

FRANKLIN reached Philadelphia some time in October, 1726, and found many things had changed during his absence. Keith was no longer governor, but walked the streets as a common citizen. He seemed a little ashamed at seeing Franklin, and passed him by without saying anything. Miss Read, too, whom he had left under the pledge of an engagement, had grown tired of his long neglect, and at the insistence of her friends had married a potter named Rogers. The union, however, had proved unfortunate, and the lady was again living at home under her maiden name, it being believed that Rogers had a previous wife.

Franklin at once entered the employment of his friend Denham, who opened a thriving business on Water Street. But after an engagement of four months he was left idle

by Mr. Denham's death, and, finding nothing better to do, returned to his old employer, Keimer. Here he received good wages as foreman of the shop, but soon discovered that he was engaged only to teach Keimer's raw hands the trade, and was to be dismissed as soon as this was accomplished. Franklin had a habit apparently of breaking with a burdensome friend by means of a judicious quarrel. He had done so with his brother James, with Collins, with Ralph, and now he parted with Keimer in the same way. After an interval of a few months, during which he was again for a while in the employment of Keimer, he entered into partnership with one of the hands, Meredith by name, and in the spring of 1728 started an independent printing-house.

At this point Franklin interrupts the narrative of his life to give some account of his religious beliefs, and we will follow his example. And first of all let us say frankly that Parton, whose work is likely long to remain the standard biography of Franklin, gives a false color to the reli-

gious experience of his hero. Of regeneration there is in Franklin no sign, but instead of that a constant growth, — which is far more wholesome. He was always an amused and skeptical observer of the revivals and wild enthusiasms kindled by his friend Whitefield and by the inspired preacher of Northampton. And it is quite absurd to speak of Franklin as "the consummate Christian of his time." There was in him none of the emotional nature and little of the spirituality that go to make the complete Christian. His strength lay in his temperance, prudence, justice, and courage, — eminently the pagan virtues; and indeed he was from first to last a great pagan, who lapsed now and then into the pseudo-religious platitudes of the eighteenth century deists.

His family had early adopted the reformed faith, and had possessed the courage to continue of this faith through the bloody persecutions of Queen Mary. Under Charles II. Benjamin's father went a step further, casting in his lot with the non-conformist Presbyterians; and it was the persecutions of that society

which drove him with his family to America. Independence, or even recalcitrance, together with broad toleration of the faith of others, was in the family blood, and Benjamin continued the good tradition. From revolt against Rome to revolt against the established English Church, and from this to complete independence of individual belief, was after all a natural progression.

Among the books which Franklin had read in Boston were Shaftesbury and Collins, representative deistical writers of the time, and he had been led by them, as he says, to doubt "many points of our religious doctrines." Now there are in religion two elements quite distinct and at times even antagonistic, though by the ordinary mind they are commonly seen as blended together. These are the emotional and the moral natures. In many religious ceremonies of the Orient, religion is purely an emotion, an exaltation of the nerves, accompanied at times by outbreaking immorality; and unfortunately the same phenomena have been too often seen in our own land. This emotional

element is always connected with the imagination and with belief in some form of revelation. The other element of religion is the law of morality which has been taught the world over by true philosophers, and which depends at last on the simple feeling that a man should to a certain varying extent sacrifice his personal advantage for the good of the community. Now the deists of the eighteenth century, of whom Voltaire was the great champion, denied revelation and sought to banish the emotions from religion. They believed in a God who manifested himself in the splendid pageantry of nature, and this they called natural revelation. They laid especial emphasis on morality, but in their attempt to sever morals from enthusiasm (*enthousiasmos*, god-in-us) they too often reduced human life to a barren formula. From this brief account it will be seen how naturally Franklin, with his parentage and particular genius, fell a prey to the teachings of Shaftesbury.

After a little while, however, he began to notice that certain of his friends who pro-

tested most loudly against religion were quite untrustworthy in their morals as well. Moreover he attributed several *errata* of his own early life to lack of religious principles, and to remedy this defect he now undertook — deliberately if we may credit his later confessions — to build up a religion of his own. There is, one must acknowledge, something grotesque in this endeavor to supply the warmth of the emotional imagination by the use of cold reason, and had Franklin possessed less wit and more humor he would never have fallen into such bathos. The little book still exists in which Franklin wrote out his creed and private liturgy. The creed expresses a belief in "one Supreme, most perfect Being, Author and Father of the gods themselves." Finding this God to be infinitely above man's comprehension, our religionist goes on to say: "I conceive, then, that the Infinite has created many beings or gods vastly superior to man, who can better conceive his perfections than we, and return him a more rational and glorious praise. . . . It may be these created

gods are immortal; or it may be that, after many ages, they are changed, and others supply their places. Howbeit, I conceive that each of these is exceeding wise and good, and very powerful; and that each has made for himself one glorious sun, attended with a beautiful and admirable system of planets. It is that particular wise and good God, who is the author and owner of our system, that I propose for the object of my praise and adoration." Thereupon follows the form of adoration, or liturgy, including an invocation, psalm, indication of philosophic reading to take the place of the lessons, singing of the Hymn to the Creator from Milton's Paradise Lost, and litany. The whole is not without elevation, and the litany, composed as it is by a young man of twenty-two, touches one with a feeling almost of pathos for its true humility and reaching out after virtue.

Franklin continued to use this form of worship for a number of years; but its fantastic nature seems to have dawned on him at last, and he gave it up for a still simpler

creed consisting merely in reverence for the Deity and in respect for the moral law. In the matter of public worship he was of the same opinion as Spinoza and many other philosophers. He esteemed public worship salutary for the state, and paid an annual subscription to the Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia; but he also esteemed it his privilege to stay away from service, and indulged in this privilege to the full, making Sunday his chief day of study. Though affiliated in this way to the Presbyterians, he showed perfect impartiality, or even indifference, to the various denominations of the Christian world. The only sect he ever really praised was the Dunkers, whom he commended for their modesty in not formulating a creed. He quotes with pleasure the character given himself of being merely "an honest man of no sect at all." Tolerance in religion and in every other walk of life was indeed a marked and distinguishing trait of his character. He was of the mind of Bishop Warburton, when he said, "Orthodoxy is my doxy and Heterodoxy is your doxy."

It is a little disconcerting to find our philosopher himself proposing a new sect, which should be called the Society of the Free and Easy, and which actually progressed so far as to possess two enthusiastic disciples. The creed of this projected sect may be taken as an expression of Franklin's mature belief: —

"That there is one God, who made all things.

"That he governs the world by his providence.

"That he ought to be worshipped by adoration, prayer, and thanksgiving.

"But that the most acceptable service to God is doing good to man.

"That the soul is immortal.

"And that God will certainly reward virtue and punish vice, either here or hereafter."

The real religion of his life consisted in the practice of virtue with a minimum of emotional imagination. His methodical mind found it convenient to tabulate the virtues in a manner more precise, as he

thought, than they usually appear. His table is not without interest: —

"1. TEMPERANCE. — Eat not to dullness; drink not to elevation.

"2. SILENCE. — Speak not but what may benefit others or yourself; avoid trifling conversation.

"3. ORDER. — Let all your things have their places; let each part of your business have its time.

"4. RESOLUTION. — Resolve to perform what you ought; perform without fail what you resolve.

"5. FRUGALITY. — Make no expense but to do good to others or yourself; i. e., waste nothing.

"6. INDUSTRY. — Lose no time; be always employed in something useful; cut off all unnecessary actions.

"7. SINCERITY. — Use no hurtful deceit; think innocently and justly; and if you speak, speak accordingly.

"8. JUSTICE. — Wrong none by doing injuries or omitting benefits that are your duty.

"9. MODERATION. — Avoid extremes; forbear resenting injuries so much as you think they deserve.

"10. CLEANLINESS. — Tolerate no uncleanliness in body, clothes, or habitation.

"11. TRANQUILLITY. — Be not disturbed at trifles, or at accidents common or unavoidable.

"12. CHASTITY. . . .

"13. HUMILITY. — Imitate Jesus and Socrates."

These virtues he has arranged in such an order that the acquisition of one naturally leads to the acquisition of the following. As regards chastity, he says himself: "The hard-to-be-governed passion of youth" had more than once led him astray. But there is every reason to suppose he exercised great self-control in this as in all other passions. We may remark here that Franklin had an illegitimate son, William, whom he reared in his own home, but who caused him great pain by siding with the Tories in the Revolution. An illegitimate son of William, born in London and named William Temple

Franklin, adhered to the grandfather and was a great comfort to him in his old age. One other of these virtues Franklin could never acquire. He confesses sadly that try as he might he could never learn orderliness. But in general it may be said that few men have ever set before themselves so wise a law of conduct, and that still fewer men have ever come so near to attaining their ideal. This was both because his ideal was so thoroughly practical, and because he was a man of indomitable will who had genuinely chosen true Philosophy as his guide. "O vitæ Philosophia dux! O virtutum indagatrix expultrixque vitiorum!" — O Philosophy, thou guide of life! thou searcher out of virtues and expeller of vices! — he wrote as one of the mottoes on his little book of conduct, and to him the words were a living reality.

The virtues in Franklin were eminently human. Though dwelling in a community of Quakers and often identified with them, he looked to anything rather than the inner light for guidance, nor could he conceive the

meaning of those "divine pleasures" which William Penn declared "are to be found in a free solitude." On his voyage home from London the boy philosopher had written in his journal: "Man is a sociable being, and it is, for aught I know, one of the worst of punishments to be excluded from society." Accordingly on his return to Philadelphia he began to cultivate seriously his "sociable being."

Among the few clubs famous in literature is the Junto which Franklin established in 1727, and which lasted for forty years. This club was a little circle of friends, never more than twelve, who met on Friday evenings to discuss matters of interest. Twenty-four questions were read, with a pause after each for filling and drinking a glass of wine. Two or three of these questions will suffice to show their general aim.

"1. Have you met with anything in the author you last read, remarkable, or suitable to be communicated to the Junto, particularly in history, morality, poetry, physic, travels, mechanic arts, or other parts of knowledge?

"11. Do you think of anything at present, in which the Junto may be serviceable to mankind, to their country, to their friends, or to themselves?

"15. Have you lately observed any encroachment on the just liberties of the people?

"20. In what manner can the Junto, or any of them, assist you in any of your honorable designs?"

Besides the answering of these questions, there were regular debates, declamations, and the reading of essays; while the wise Franklin took care always that no undue heat should enter into the proceedings. Singing and drinking and other amusements also claimed a fair share of the time. It is curious to observe that in his Autobiography Franklin half apologizes for mentioning the Junto, and declares that his reason for so doing was to show how the various members of the club aided him in his business. Were the Autobiography our only source of information, we might sum up the lessons of Franklin's life in the one word

*Thrift.* The truth is that many of Franklin's schemes for public improvement first found a hearing in the secrecy of these friendly meetings.

Before returning to Franklin's active life, let us insert here an amusing epitaph which he composed about this time, and which has become justly famous: —

THE BODY
OF
BENJAMIN FRANKLIN
PRINTER
(LIKE THE COVER OF AN OLD BOOK
ITS CONTENTS TORN OUT
AND STRIPT OF ITS LETTERING AND GILDING)
LIES HERE, FOOD FOR WORMS.
BUT THE WORK SHALL NOT BE LOST
FOR IT WILL (AS HE BELIEVED)
APPEAR ONCE MORE
IN A NEW AND MORE ELEGANT EDITION
REVISED AND CORRECTED
BY
THE AUTHOR.

# IV

## THE SCIENTIST AND PUBLIC CITIZEN IN PHILADELPHIA

FRANKLIN was twenty-two years old when he began business with Meredith. They had no capital, and in fact were in debt for part of their appurtenances. Meredith proved not only incompetent, but a hard drinker as well; so that Franklin, accepting the kindness of two friends who lent him the money, soon bought his partner out and conducted the shop alone. He prospered steadily, and in twenty years was able to retire from active business. From the beginning friends came to his aid: through a member of the Junto he got printing from the Quakers; by his careful work he drew away from old Bradford the public printing for the Assembly; he engaged assistants, and before many years was far the most important printer in the colonies. Besides his regular trade he was

bookbinder, sold books and stationery, and dealt in soap and any other commodity that came handy. The description of his thrift we must give in his own words: "In order to secure my credit and character as a tradesman, I took care not only to be in reality industrious and frugal, but to avoid the appearance to the contrary. I dressed plain, and was seen at no places of idle diversion. I never went out a-fishing or shooting; a book indeed sometimes debauched me from my work, but that was seldom, was private, and gave no scandal; and to show that I was not above my business I sometimes brought home the paper I purchased at the stores through the streets on a wheelbarrow."

When Franklin became independent of Keimer he turned to his favorite project of establishing a newspaper. But in this case his usual habit of secrecy failed him, and knowledge of his plans reached Keimer's ears. Immediately his old master anticipated him by issuing proposals for a paper which he grandiloquently styled "The Universal Instructor in all Arts and Sciences, and

Pennsylvania Gazette," — an utterly absurd sheet, whose contents were taken chiefly from an encyclopædia recently published in London. To counteract this Franklin published in Bradford's paper, "The Mercury," a series of essays after the manner of Addison, to which he subscribed the name "Busy-Body." Other members of the Junto contributed to the series; and Keimer, being stung by their satire, replied with coarse abuse, and also with attempted imitation. But Keimer was quite unequal to the conflict, and after publishing thirty-nine numbers of the paper sold it for a small sum to Franklin and Meredith, and himself moved to the Barbadoes. Number 40, October 2, 1729, under the simple title of "The Pennsylvania Gazette," came from Franklin's press. The encyclopædic extracts were cut short, and in their stead appeared what news could be gathered, with occasional clever essays such as only Franklin could write. It was for the times a good paper, and the printing was admirably done.

With prosperity Franklin began to think

of matrimony. A family of Godfreys lived in the same house with him, and now Mrs. Godfrey undertook to make a match between him and the daughter of a relative of hers. Franklin's account of this affair for its coolness and placidity may almost be compared with Gibbon's "I sighed as a lover, I obeyed as a son." On learning that the girl's parents could not or would not give with her enough money to pay off his debts, the gallant suitor at once and irrevocably withdrew.

He then looked about him for another match, but found to his chagrin that an adventurous printer could not command an agreeable wife and a dowry at the same time. Being determined to marry, that he might bring order into his life, he at last turned to Miss Read, with whom he had maintained a friendly correspondence, and notwithstanding the difficulties in the way married her on the 1st of September, 1730. If he rejected Miss Godfrey because she brought no dowry with her, he praised his wife chiefly because she aided

him in his economies. "He that would thrive must ask his wife," he quotes, and congratulates himself that he has a wife as much disposed to frugality as himself. She helped in the business; they kept no idle servants; their table was plain and simple, their furniture of the cheapest. His breakfast for a long time was bread and milk, and he ate it out of a twopenny earthen porringer with a pewter spoon. "But mark," he adds, "how luxuries will enter families and make a progress despite of principles: being called one morning to breakfast, I found it in a china bowl, with a spoon of silver! They had been bought for me without my knowledge by my wife, and had cost her the enormous sum of twenty-three shillings, for which she had no other excuse or apology to make but that she thought *her* husband deserved a silver spoon and china bowl as well as any of his neighbors. This was the first appearance of plate and china in our house, which afterward, in a course of years as our wealth increased, augmented gradually to several hundred pounds in value."

Mrs. Franklin's temper was not of the serenest, and her manners perhaps were not such as would have honored him had she followed him into the great world; but she made him a good wife, — and we need not repeat the tattle which we are told is still current among some of the high families of Philadelphia. They had two children, — a son, the idol of his father's heart, who died as a child; and a daughter, who married Richard Bache, and is the ancestress of a large family.

In this happy home, and as his business prospered, Franklin found more and more time for study and self-improvement. In 1733 he began the acquisition of languages, teaching himself to read French fluently, and then passing on to Italian and Spanish. Chess was always a favorite amusement with him; and we can imagine the grave philosopher playing a cautious and invulnerable game, with now and then, when least expected, a brilliant sally. But his conscience seems always to have protested against the waste of time involved, and he now made

use of the game to forward his studies. With his favorite antagonist he agreed that the victor in each game should impose some task in Italian, which the other on his honor was to complete before the next meeting. As his opponent was a pretty even match for him they both made steady progress in the language. In Latin he had had a year's instruction at school, and later in life he dabbled a little in that language; but his knowledge of the classics was always superficial, and he seems to have entertained something like a spite against them.

In 1732 Franklin began the publication of an almanac under the name of Richard Saunders, which he continued for twenty-five years, and which gained immense popularity as Poor Richard's Almanac. It was the flourishing time of such publications. Since the year 1639, when Stephen Daye printed his first almanac at Cambridge, these annual messages had increased in number until after theology they became perhaps the most genuine feature of colonial literature. And from the first they displayed the sort

of shrewdness and humor which have always been characteristic of the American mind. So, too, the bulk of Poor Richard's production was humor, sometimes blunt and coarse, and sometimes instinct with the finest irony. Perhaps the best of Poor Richard's jokes is that played at the expense of Titan Leeds, his rival in Philadelphia. In the first issue Mr. Saunders announces the imminent death of his friend Titan Leeds: "He dies, by my calculation, made at his request, on October 17, 1733, 3 ho., 29 m., P. M., at the very instant of the ☌ of ☉ and ☿."[1] By his own calculation, he will survive till the 26th of the same month. This small difference between us we have disputed whenever we have met these nine years past; but at length he is inclined to agree with my judgment. Which of us is most exact a little time will now determine. As, therefore, these Provinces may not longer expect to see any of his performances after this year, I think myself free to take up the task." Naturally Mr. Titan Leeds objected with

[1] ☌ signifies *conjunction*; ☉ *the sun*; ☿ *Mercury*.

strenuous voice to this summary manner of being shuffled out of the world; and Franklin's yearly protest that Leeds is really dead, and his appeal to the degenerating wit of Leeds's almanac to prove his assertion, is one of the most successful and malicious jokes ever perpetrated. We ought to add, however, that this venomous jest is borrowed bodily from Dean Swift's treatment of the poor almanac-maker, Partridge. Indeed it might be said of Franklin, as Molière said of himself, that he took his own wherever he found it.

But what gave the almanac its permanent fame was the cleverness of the maxims scattered through its pages. These wise saws Franklin gathered from far and wide, often, however, reshaping them and marking them with the stamp of his peculiar genius. As might be expected, they are chiefly directed to instill the precepts of industry and frugality. On ceasing to edit the almanac in 1757 Franklin gathered together the best of these proverbs and wove them into a continuous narrative, which he pretends to have

heard spoken at an auction by an old man called Father Abraham. This speech of Father Abraham became immediately famous, was reprinted in England, was translated into the languages of Europe, and still lives. It made the name of Poor Richard a household word the world over.

Franklin, however, had many intellectual interests besides reading and writing. He was always interested in music, himself playing the guitar and harp and violin; and one of his proudest achievements was the perfection of a musical instrument called the armonica, which consisted of a series of glasses so designed as to give forth the notes of the musical scale when chafed with the moistened finger.

He was moreover sensitive in his own way to the various spiritual movements that swept over the country. This was the period of wild revivals, when religion, entering into the converted soul with inconceivable violence, found expression in gasping shrieks, rigid faintings, and strong convulsions; and the leader of this movement, strange as it

may seem, was a warm friend of Franklin's. George Whitefield first visited Philadelphia in 1739, and immediately filled the city with enthusiasm by his powerful oratory. Franklin was astonished at the hold he got on the people, especially as he assured them they were naturally half beasts and half devils; but our philosopher admits that he himself succumbed once to the preacher's spell. Whitefield was preaching a begging sermon for a project which Franklin did not approve, and the latter made a silent resolve that he would not contribute. He had in his pocket a handful of copper money, three or four silver dollars, and five pistoles in gold. As the orator proceeded, he began to soften and concluded to give the copper. Another stroke of eloquence made him ashamed of that and determined him to give the silver; and the peroration was so admirable that he emptied his pocket wholly into the collector's dish, gold and all. But he was never too much carried away to omit analyzing and observing; and on one occasion, when Whitefield was preaching in the open air, he calculated

by a clever experiment that the speaker might be heard by more than thirty thousand persons. Nor did he suffer Whitefield's cant phrases to pass unchallenged. At one time he invited the preacher to stop at his house, and Whitefield in accepting declared that if Franklin made the kind offer for Christ's sake he should not miss of a reward. To which the philosopher replied: "Don't let me be mistaken; it was not for *Christ's* sake, but for *your* sake."

This intimate acquaintance with Whitefield forms something like a bond of union between Franklin and his only intellectual compeer, Jonathan Edwards; and the different attitude of the two men towards the wandering revivalist is a good illustration of the great contrast in their characters. If Franklin may in some ways be called the typical American, yet the lonely, introverted, God-intoxicated soul of Edwards stands as a solemn witness to depths of understanding in his countrymen which Dr. Franklin's keen wit had no means of fathoming. But in one respect the two minds were alike: they were

both acute observers of nature, and we have only to read Edwards's treatise on spiders, written when he was twelve years old, and to follow his later physical investigations, which indeed foreshadowed some of Franklin's electrical discoveries, to learn how brilliant a part he might have played in science if his intelligence had not been troubled by the terrible theology of the day. As for Franklin, we have seen the inquisitive bent of his mind in childhood, and as he grew older the habit of observing and recording and theorizing became his master passion. Though scarcely a professional scientist, his various discoveries in natural history and his mechanical inventions brought great renown to him as a man, and were even an important factor in the national struggle for independence.

Nothing was too small or too great to attract his investigating eyes. All his life he was interested in the phenomena of health and in the care of the body, and even as a boy, it will be remembered, he had experimented in the use of a vegetarian diet. He had his own theory in regard to colds,

maintaining that they are not the result of exposure to a low temperature, but are due to foul air and to a relaxed state of the body, — as in general they no doubt are. His letters are full of clever protests against the common theory, and at times he was brought by his opinions into amusing conflict with the habits of other persons. On one occasion in a tavern he was compelled to occupy the same bed with John Adams, who, being an invalid and afraid of night air, shut down the window. "Oh!" says Franklin, "don't shut the window, we shall be suffocated." Adams answered that he feared the evening air. Dr. Franklin replied, "The air within the chamber will soon be, and indeed now is, worse than that without doors. Come, open the window and come to bed, and I will convince you. I believe you are not acquainted with my theory of colds." Whereupon Adams got into bed, and the Doctor began an harangue upon air and cold, respiration and perspiration, with which the Bostonian was so much amused that he soon fell asleep and

left Franklin and his philosophy together. The effect of drafts on chimneys was just as interesting to our philosopher as their effect on the human system, and it was one of his diversions when visiting the great houses of England and Europe to cure smoky fireplaces. From chimneys to stoves is an easy step, and the invention of the so-called Pennsylvania stove is one of his best known achievements.

All his life he was an observer of the weather, and a student of the winds and tides. His first discovery in natural history was an observation of the fact that storms move against the wind, that is, for instance, that a northeast storm along the coast is felt at Philadelphia earlier than at Boston. He made a careful study of the temperature of the gulf stream in the Atlantic; and in a letter written when he was seventy-nine years old he gives a long account of his inventions and observations in nautical matters.

But his discoveries in electricity quite overshadow all his other work of the sort,

and on them must rest his real claim to scientific renown. For many years the world had been amusing itself with various machines for making sparks and giving shocks, and after the discovery of the Leyden jar, in 1745, the manipulation of electrical toys and machines became the rage among scientists and even among the people of society. Just about this time a friend in England sent Franklin specimens of the glass tubes used to create electricity by friction, and immediately Franklin's inquisitive mind was fired to take up the new study. So fully indeed was his attention engrossed by the series of experiments he now undertook, alone and with several investigating friends in the city, that business became irksome to him and he retired from active management of the printing house. Besides making many ingenious toys and showy experiments, Franklin added three contributions of real importance to science.

1. He anticipated Faraday in the discovery that the electricity in a charged Leyden jar resides on the glass and not on the metal coatings. He, however, made no generalizations from this discovery.

2. He advanced the fluid theory of electricity, recognizing clearly the dual nature of the varieties commonly called positive and negative from the mathematical symbols used to express them.

3. He established the identity of lightning and electricity.

To understand the importance of this last discovery we must remember with what terror the world had hitherto regarded this bewildering apparition of the sky. It was not so much the dread of feeling above one an irresponsible power subject to a law that knows no sympathy with human life, as the more debasing fear of superstition, that sees in the red thunderbolt a deadly instrument of vengeance hurled by the hand of an angry deity, and that loosens the inmost sinews of a man's moral courage. With the knowledge that lightning is only a magnified electrical spark, fell one of the last strongholds of false religion. And there is something eminently fit in the fact that this lurking mystery of the heavens was finally exploded by Dr. Franklin, the exponent of common sense.

I am told by a specialist that the neatness and thoroughness of the reasoning by which Franklin established his theory before proceeding to experimentation are most laudable, and I am sure his letters of explanation have a literary charm not often found in scientific writing. The paper in which Franklin developed his theory and showed how it might be tested by drawing lightning from the clouds by means of a pointed wire set up on a steeple, was sent to his friend in England, and there printed; and at the suggestion of the great Buffon the same paper was translated into French. The pamphlet created a sensation in France, and the proposed experiment was actually performed in the presence of the king. Before the report, however, of the successful experiment reached Franklin he had himself verified his theory, using a kite to attain an altitude, as there was no spire or high building in Philadelphia. Taking his son with him, he went to an old cow house in the country, before a storm, and there, to catch the electric fluid, sent up his kite made of an old silk

handkerchief. A wire extended from the upright stick of the kite, and this was connected with the cord, which when wet acted as a good conductor. The part of the cord held in his hand was of silk, and between this and the wet hempen cord a key was inserted and connected with a Leyden jar. How successful the experiment proved to be, all the world knows. Somehow all the important events of Franklin's life are dramatic and picturesque, and this scene, especially, of the philosopher in the storm drawing down the very thunderbolts of heaven has always had a fascination for the popular mind. The detailed story of the experiment became public only through Franklin's conversation with his friends. When he learned that his theory had been previously verified in France, his modesty was so great that in writing he simply told how the experiment might be performed with a kite, never that he himself had actually accomplished it. In consequence of this discovery he was at once elected a member of the Royal Society of London, Yale and Harvard gave him the

honorary degree of master of arts, and everywhere he was celebrated as the foremost philosopher of the day.

When the time comes we shall see that Franklin's scientific fame was a real aid to him in his diplomatic career ; now we must turn our eyes backward and trace from the beginning his slow rise in political and civic power. And it is a peculiar feature of the day and of Franklin's individual character that many of his reforms took their start in the gayety of social intercourse. There was nothing morose, nothing stern, in our genial philosopher. Though always temperate, his vivacity and easy politeness made him welcome in any merry company of the day. He could sing with the best of the young blades and even compose his own ditties ; and one of these songs, "The Old Man's Wish," he tells us he sang at least a thousand times. The chorus of the song is characteristic enough to be quoted : —

"May I govern my passions with absolute sway,
Grow wiser and better as my strength wears away,
Without gout or stone, by gentle decay ; "

and another ballad in praise of his wife still has a kind of popularity: —

"Of their Chloes and Phyllises poets may prate,
I sing my plain country Joan,
These twelve years my wife, still the joy of my life,
Blest day that I made her my own."

Franklin's first public improvement carries us back to the early leathern-apron days of the Junto. Books were a rare commodity among the frugal members of that club, and for a while they increased their resources by keeping all their volumes together in the club room for common use. But this plan proving hardly feasible, Franklin in the year 1731 drew up proposals for a city library. His method of arousing public interest in the scheme was one to which he always had recourse on such occasions, and is a credit to his modesty as well as to his shrewdness. "I put myself," he says, "as much as I could out of sight, and stated it as a scheme of a number of friends, who had requested me to go about and propose it to such as they thought lovers of reading." He succeeded, as he always did in his projects, and the

library, still an honored institution of Philadelphia, is the parent of all the subscription libraries of the country.

Through the aid of the Junto, also, Franklin set in motion another project. As a boy he had seen the first fire company started in Boston, and now that his Quaker home had grown to be a thriving city, he undertook to introduce the same system there. No doubt many of our readers have seen the curious relics of these colonial fire companies, — old leathern buckets stamped with various devices and with the owner's name, which were used to pass water rapidly from hand to hand. The companies had a social as well as a useful aim, so that families were proud to preserve such memorials of the old days.

Owing to the wretched system in vogue, the night watch of the city had fallen into a deplorable state, the watchmen consisting of a set of ragamuffins who passed their nights in tippling and left the town to take care of itself. To remedy this evil Franklin made use of the Junto and of his paper,

"The Gazette," and once more his efforts were successful.

It seemed, indeed, as if there were no limits to his activity. At different times he bent his energies to getting the streets paved, to improving the lighting of the city, to introducing various novelties in agriculture, and to assisting other projects, such as the establishment of the Pennsylvania hospital. More important, perhaps, than these was the founding of the academy which has since developed into the University of Pennsylvania. As early as 1743 we find Franklin regretting that there was no convenient college where he might send his son to be educated; and in 1749 he took up the matter seriously, publishing a pamphlet which he called, "Proposals relating to the Education of Youth in Pennsylvania." Nor did his zeal end here. He continued to urge on the project, and in a short time the money was raised and the school actually opened. Franklin was for more than forty years a trustee of the institution, and took just pride in the good which it accomplished for the

community. His purpose in one respect, however, was foiled; he was an ardent advocate of English and the sciences in education, and would have been glad to have the study of Latin and Greek utterly banished from the schools. Fortunately in this matter public opinion was too strong for him, and he was obliged to succumb to the regular curriculum. For some reason, whether because of early lack of training in these studies or because his mind was of such a sort as to be completely absorbed in the present, he was all his life violently prejudiced against the classics, and on his very deathbed one of his last acts was to compose a mocking diatribe against the use of those languages. It is one of the few cases where his judgment was marred, not by the limitations of his intelligence, but a lack of the deeper imagination, — where he applied his footrule of utility to measure quantities beyond its reach.

With Franklin's increasing prosperity and popularity his influence in matters political grew more and more dominant. His first

recognition in this field was in 1736, when he was chosen clerk of the General Assembly, — a position which he continued to hold until he was elected a member of the Assembly itself. He found this office very tedious, but amused himself during the long debates by constructing magic squares of figures and by other diversions of the sort. Constant to his practice he lets us know that he retained the position chiefly because it enabled him to get control of the public printing, and once when threatened by the advent of a new member with loss of this lucrative employment he saved himself by his usual recourse to honorable stratagem. Having heard that this gentleman had in his library a certain very scarce and curious book, Franklin wrote him a note expressing a desire to read the volume and asking to borrow it for a few days. The book came immediately, and the two students were at once bound together in friendship. "This is another instance," Franklin adds, "of the truth of an old maxim I had learned, which says: 'He that has once done you a kindness will

be more ready to do you another than he whom you yourself have obliged.' "

Other positions came to Franklin in due time. The very next year he was made postmaster of Philadelphia, and filled the office so well that some years later he was put at the head of the postal system for the colonies. This gave him an opportunity to become familiar with the political affairs of the whole country and enhanced his usefulness very much.

What first brought him into real prominence was his activity during the troublesome times that now followed with the Indians. England was at war with France, and as usual the combatants stirred up the savages to commit all kinds of atrocities. Franklin was much incensed that the peace-loving Quakers of his colony should refuse to make any provision for defense against the Indians on the western frontier or against possible attacks of the French from the river. His indignation was increased by a visit to Boston in 1746, where he found the people in a state of warlike fervor after the con-

quest of Louisburg; and on returning home he wrote an eloquent pamphlet, called "Plain Truth," to rouse the colony to a sense of its peril. Despite the half-hearted opposition of the Quakers in the Assembly companies were raised, cannon, by the shrewd policy of Franklin, were got from New York, and the promoter of the movement was even asked to act as colonel of the troops, — an honor which he declined. One of Franklin's friends now warned him that the Quakers in the Assembly would dismiss him from his position as clerk and advised him to resign at once to avoid the disgrace. Franklin's reply, which he was fond of quoting in after life, shows the sturdy nature of the man: "I shall never *ask*, never *refuse*, nor ever RESIGN an office." As it happened, however, he was again chosen unanimously at the next election, and we may suppose that he was keen enough to know with whom he had to deal. The good Quakers would not fight, but they were not always averse to have some one do their fighting for them.

We are approaching the tumultuous times

of the Seven Years' War, when the sound of cannon was indeed heard round the world, and when the prowess of England's arms added India and Canada to her empire. In 1752 Franklin, who was now a member of the legislature, was sent, together with the speaker of the Assembly, to confer with the Indians of Ohio; and if no important results came from the conference it at least helped to give Franklin an insight into Indian character such as few men possessed. Two years later, when actual war became imminent, he was chosen one of the commissioners from Pennsylvania to meet those of the other colonies at Albany and consult on measures of common defense. Any one might see that the colonies would be stronger united than separated, and several of the commissioners came prepared with proposals of union. Franklin had already published in his "Gazette" an article on the subject, to which he had added a wood-cut showing a snake cut in thirteen pieces with the device JOIN OR DIE. On the way to Albany he had drawn up a plan of union

which pleased the Congress, and which resembled very much the form of union afterwards adopted during the Revolution; but as Franklin observes, "Its fate was singular; the Assemblies did not adopt it, as they all thought there was too much prerogative in it; and in England it was judged to have too much of the democratic." Instead of this scheme the London Board of Trade devised a plan of their own which, besides other objectionable features, involved the deplorable principle of taxing the colonies without their consent. It is interesting to find Franklin the next winter in Boston discussing the improprieties of this plan with Governor Shirley, and it has been truly observed that his arguments include almost all that was later brought out when the question of taxation without representation became a burning question.

In 1755 we find Franklin connected with an event which first brought Washington into prominence. That was the year of Braddock's unfortunate campaign, and the Assembly of Pennsylvania, which had re-

fused to grant money for the war and now feared that Braddock would take revenge by ravaging the colony, sent Franklin into Maryland to consult with the general and pacify him if possible. It is needless to say that Franklin succeeded. By cunning advertisements and appeals to the farmers in Pennsylvania he got wagons and teams for the army; but to do this he had to pledge himself for a considerable sum of money, his own credit being higher than that of the government, and after the general rout in which many of the wagons and horses were lost he was compelled to pay out large sums of money for which he was never entirely reimbursed. He also persuaded the Assembly of Pennsylvania to provide the younger officers of the regiment with horses and stores for the campaign, although to Washington, as we know, all this accumulation of provisions for such an expedition seemed no better than a nuisance. Franklin, too, had his fears, and even went so far as to caution Braddock against the ambuscades of the Indians. Braddock smiled at his ignorance,

and replied: "These savages may indeed be a formidable enemy to your raw American militia, but upon the king's regular and disciplined troops, sir, it is impossible they should make any impression." Franklin tells us he was conscious of the impropriety of disputing with a military man in matters of his profession, and said no more. The story of Braddock's defeat is only too well known; but to Franklin at least the campaign brought some profit. When later he went to England he found that the general's account of his intelligence and generosity had added considerably to his reputation.

The failure of the expedition had left the western frontier open to the savage raids of the Indians, and Pennsylvania, owing to her unprotected condition, suffered more than the other colonies. Franklin came to the rescue with a bill to raise volunteers which was carried through the Assembly; troops were quickly organized, and the philosopher was himself appointed general. He was two months in the field and conducted him-

self with admirable prudence, although he did not undergo the test of actual fighting. After that time he was recalled by the governor to Philadelphia, for the Assembly was about to meet and his services were needed at home.

The old trouble between the proprietary governor and the Assembly had now reached an acute stage. The two sons of William Penn, into whose hands the colony had descended, pursued a narrow and selfish policy, forcing the governor to veto every bill for raising money unless the estates owned by the proprietors were exempted from taxation. From the beginning Franklin had stood with the popular party in opposing these regulations, yet curiously enough had always been a favorite with the governors. These magistrates were bound to follow the proprietors' will under penalty of being recalled; but on the other hand their salary was dependent on the pleasure of the Assembly, and they may well have clung to a wise and tolerant intermediary like Franklin. Nothing, however, could now allay the

hostile feelings. The Assembly voted money for immediate defense under the conditions imposed, but at the same time declared that the measure was not to be held as a precedent for the future; and Franklin was sent to England to treat with the proprietaries in person, and if necessary with the Crown.

## V

### FIRST AND SECOND MISSIONS TO ENGLAND

FRANKLIN reached London July 27, 1757, when he was fifty-one years old. He remained in England five years, and during that period his life was one of manifold interests and vexations. His business with the Penns first engaged his attention; but from those stubborn gentlemen he got nothing but insolence and delays. After much manœuvring the dispute was brought before a committee of the Privy Council, where the Pennsylvania Assembly through its representative virtually won its case. The proprietary estates were made subject to taxation, and this bone of contention was for a time removed. It was indeed a great victory for the Philadelphia printer; but perhaps its chief value was the training it gave him for the more important diplomatic negotiations that were to come later. There was

that in Franklin's nature which made him an ideal diplomatist. Under the utmost candor and simplicity he concealed a penetration into character and a skill in using legitimate chicanery that rarely missed their mark. Then, too, he was persistent: what he undertook to do he never left until it was done. Though far from being an orator, he wielded a pen that for clearness and logical pointedness has scarcely been surpassed, and his powers of irony and sarcasm were worthy of Swift himself.

Among other subjects which engaged Franklin's pen at this time was a question of vital interest, as he thought, to the empire. Under the masterly guidance of the great Pitt, England had come out victorious in the struggle with France, and the government was now debating whether Canada should be retained or given back to the French. The chief argument for surrendering the province was ominous of the future. "A neighbor that keeps us in some awe is not always the worst of neighbors. . . . If we acquire all Canada, we shall soon find North

America itself too powerful and too populous to be governed by us at a distance." To this timid reasoning, which was attributed to William Burke, Franklin replied in a pamphlet, discussing the whole question with the utmost acumen, displaying the future greatness of the empire in America, and denying that the colonies would ever revolt. Touching this last apprehension he says: "There are so many causes that must operate to prevent it that I will venture to say a union amongst them for such a purpose is not merely improbable, it is impossible. . . . When I say such a union is impossible, I mean without the most grievous tyranny and oppression. . . . *The waves do not rise but when the wind blows.* . . . What such an administration as the Duke of Alva's in the Netherlands might produce, I know not; but this, I think, I have a right to deem impossible." Strange words to come from Franklin in those days; but it is thought they were of considerable influence in the final decision of the question. Franklin indeed was always fond of prophesying the future greatness of

America, and again in the diplomatic debates after the revolutionary war he long insisted that Canada should be severed from England and joined to the thirteen States.

But our philosopher had much to occupy him besides politics. He had taken lodgings at No. 7 Craven Street with a Mrs. Stevenson, in whom and in whose daughter he found warm and congenial friends. His correspondence with "Dear Polly," the daughter, contains some of his most entertaining letters; and he even planned, but unsuccessfully, to make her the wife of his son William. His fame as a scientist had preceded him, and introduced him into the society of many distinguished men in England and Scotland, among whom his genial nature freely expanded. And nothing could stop the activity of his mind, not even sickness. For eight weeks he struggled with a fever, but the letter to his wife conveying the story of his illness reads as if he were almost willing to undergo such an experience for the opportunity of studying pathology which it offered.

At last he was ready to return home. The University of St. Andrews had conferred on him the degree of Doctor of Laws, and afterwards Oxford had done the same. He had succeeded in his mission, his son had been appointed governor of New Jersey, and he looked forward to a life of honorable ease in his adopted city. Just before sailing he wrote to Lord Kames: "I am now waiting here only for a wind to waft me to America, but cannot leave this happy island and my friends in it without extreme regret, though I am going to a country and a people that I love. I am going from the old world to the new, and I fancy I feel like those who are leaving this world for the next. Grief at the parting, fear of the passage, hope of the future, — these different passions all affect their minds at once, and these have *tendered* me down exceedingly."

Peace had come to Europe in 1763, but not to America. The Indians, who had been aroused by European intrigue, were not so easily pacified, and western Pennsylvania especially continued to suffer from their

ravages. The men of the frontier banded together for retaliation, and unfortunately their revenge equaled the brutality of the red savages. Religious odium added bitterness to the passions. The Scotch-Irish Presbyterians of the west, enraged at the supineness of the eastern Quakers, made the extermination of the Indians a point of religion. The horror reached its climax when the good people of Paxton in cold blood massacred twenty helpless and innocent Indians, and then with a large following marched towards Philadelphia with the avowed purpose of murdering in the name of an angry God one hundred and forty peaceful Moravian Indians. The governor, a nephew of the proprietaries, came, as all men did, to Franklin in his perplexity; he even lodged in Franklin's house, and concerted with him hourly on the means of repelling the invaders. The "Paxton boys" had reached Germantown. The city was in a panic, and there was no time to lose. Franklin first got together a regiment of militia, and then, with three other gentlemen, went out to Germantown

to remonstrate with the fanatics. His mission was successful, and the insurrection was quelled; but Franklin himself had gained many enemies by his action. The people were largely in favor of the Paxton rioters; and the governor, now relieved of his immediate fears, made an infamous proclamation setting a price upon Indian scalps. A strong coalition was formed against Franklin; to the enmity of the proprietary party was now added the distrust of the people.

Just at this time the old trouble between the governor and the Assembly broke out more virulently. Despite the decision of the London Council, the governor vetoed an important bill because the proprietary estates were not exempted from taxation. An angry debate arose in the Assembly as to whether they should petition the king to withdraw Pennsylvania from the proprietaries and make it a crown colony. Franklin took an active part in this contest, and threw all the weight of his authority in favor of the petition; but in the election which followed in 1764 the combination of the

aristocrats, who sided with the proprietaries, and of the fanatics, who favored the Paxton uprising, was too strong for him, and he was not returned. After a stormy debate, however, the Assembly adopted the petition; and Franklin, despite the bitter personal attacks of John Dickinson, was chosen as agent to carry the request to England.

The petition was not allowed, and Pennsylvania remained in the hands of the proprietaries until it became an independent state. But other questions, far more important than the local difficulties of any one colony, were to occupy Franklin's and the other commissioners' time. Franklin was in England from December, 1764, until March of 1775, and during these ten years was busily engaged in supporting the colonies in their unequal struggle against the British Parliament. He was the accredited representative of Pennsylvania, Georgia, New Jersey, and Massachusetts, and before the government and the people of England stood as the champion of the whole province. Every one knows the

nature of the acts which finally created a new empire in the West, — the Stamp Act, the duty on tea, the Boston Port bill. Their very names still stir the patriotic blood of America. The principle at issue was clearly announced in the battle cry, "No taxation without representation." Franklin was a stanch advocate of the American claims, and threw all the weight of his personal influence and of his eloquent pen into the work. But in one respect he seems to have been deceived: during the first years of his mission he held Parliament responsible for all the tyrannical measures against the colonies, and looked upon the king as their natural protector. It was a feeling common among Americans who wished to preserve their allegiance to the empire while protesting against the authority of the laws. Even as late as 1771 he could write these words about George III: "I can scarcely conceive a king of better dispositions, of more exemplary virtues, or more truly desirous of promoting the welfare of his subjects." When at last the bigoted character of that sover-

eign was fully revealed to him, he despaired utterly of reconciliation with the mother country.

Franklin's labors may well be portrayed in two dramatic incidents: his examination before Parliament in 1766, and the so-called Privy Council outrage in 1774.

After the passage of the Stamp Act, Franklin wrote to a friend: "Depend upon it, my good neighbor, I took every step in my power to prevent the passing of the Stamp Act. Nobody could be more concerned and interested than myself to oppose it sincerely and heartily. . . . We might as well have hindered the sun's setting. That we could not do. But since it is down, my friend, and it may be long before it rises again, let us make as good a night of it as we can. We can still light candles. Frugality and industry will go a great way towards indemnifying us. Idleness and pride tax with a heavier hand than kings and parliaments. If we can get rid of the former, we may easily bear the latter." But Franklin's philosophical habit of accepting the inevi-

table, — a habit which for a time brought him the hostility of such strenuous patriots as the Adamses, — did not prevent him from doing all in his power to further the repeal of that act when the matter was again taken up by Parliament. Nor did America lack friends in Parliament itself, and these gentlemen now arranged that Franklin should give testimony before the bar of the House.

In the examination which followed, Franklin showed the fullness of his knowledge and the keenness of his wit better perhaps than in any other act of his life. It is impossible to give at length the replies with which he aided the friends of repeal and baffled its foes; but a few of his answers may indicate the nature of all.

*Q.* "What was the temper of America towards Great Britian before the year 1763?"

*A.* "The best in the world. They submitted willingly to the government of the Crown, and paid in their courts obedience to acts of Parliament. . . . They had not only a respect, but an affection for Great

Britain; for its laws, its customs, and manners; and even a fondness for its fashions, that greatly increased the commerce. Natives of Britain were always treated with particular regard; to be an *Old England man* was, of itself, a character of some respect, and gave a kind of rank among us."

*Q.* "What is their temper now?"

*A.* "Oh, very much altered."

*Q.* "How would the Americans receive a future tax, imposed on the same principle as the Stamp Act?"

*A.* "Just as they do the Stamp Act; *they would not pay it.*"

*Q.* "Would the colonists prefer to forego the collection of debts by legal process rather than use stamped paper?"

*A.* "I can only judge what other people will think and how they will act by what I feel within myself. I have a great many debts due to me in America, and I had rather they should remain unrecoverable by any law than submit to the Stamp Act. They will be debts of honor."

The examination was a complete success;

not even the Tories could object to it, and to Burke it seemed like the examination of a master by a parcel of schoolboys. A few days later the repeal was carried.

But the relief was only temporary, and Parliament soon returned to its high-handed measures of repression. One day in the midst of the contest Franklin was talking with a friendly member of Parliament and inveighing against the violence of the government towards Boston. The Englishman replied that these measures of repression did not originate in England, and to prove his assertion placed in Franklin's hands a packet of letters written by Hutchinson, governor of Massachusetts, and others to a member of Parliament with the intention of reaching the ears of Lord Grenville. These letters, written by native-born Americans, advised the quartering of troops on Boston, advocated the making of judges and governors dependent on England for their salaries, and were full of such sentiments as that "there must be an abridgment of what are called English liberties." Franklin by permission

sent them to Boston, where they naturally raised a furor of indignation. A petition was immediately sent over to have Governor Hutchinson removed from office, but for a while government took no action. After a time the letters got into the London newspapers with the most deplorable result. One Thomas Whately, brother of the gentleman to whom they had been addressed, was accused of purloining the letters and sending them to America. This caused a duel, and a second duel was about to be fought when Franklin published a note in the "Public Advertiser" avowing that the letters had not passed through Mr. Whately's hands, that he himself was responsible for sending them to Boston, and that no blame could be attached to the action as the letters were really of a public nature. The Tories now saw their opportunity to attack Franklin. The petition for removing Hutchinson was taken up by the Committee for Plantation Affairs, and Franklin was summoned to appear before them. Wedderburn, the king's solicitor-general, was there to speak

for Hutchinson, and Franklin, having no counsel, had the proceedings delayed for three weeks.

On the appointed day the Council met in a building called the Cockpit, and Franklin appeared before them. The room was furnished with a long table down the middle, at which the lords sat. At one end of the room was a fireplace, and in a recess at one side of the chimney Franklin stood during the whole meeting. His advocates spoke, but without much effect, and the defense of Hutchinson was then taken up by Wedderburn. But instead of arguing the point at issue, Wedderburn made it the occasion for delivering, much to the delight of the Tory lords present, a long and utterly unjustified tirade against Franklin. With thunderous voice and violent beating of his fist on the cushion before him, he denounced Franklin as the "prime mover of this whole contrivance against his majesty's two governors." Although the letters had been given to Franklin for the express purpose of having them conveyed to America, Wedder-

burn accused him of base treachery; turning to the committee he said: "I hope, my Lords, you will mark and brand the man, for the honor of this country, of Europe, and of mankind. Private correspondence has hitherto been held sacred, in times of the greatest party rage, not only in politics but religion." "He has forfeited all the respect of societies and of men. Into what companies will he hereafter go with an unembarrassed face, or the honest intrepidity of virtue? Men will watch him with a jealous eye; they will hide their papers from him, and lock up their escritoirs. He will henceforth esteem it a libel to be called *a man of letters; homo* TRIUM *litterarum* (i. e., *fur*, thief)!" "But he not only took away the letters from one brother; but kept himself concealed till he nearly occasioned the murder of the other. It is impossible to read his account, expressive of the coolest and most deliberate malice, without horror." "Amidst these tragical events, of one person nearly murdered, of another answerable for the issue, of a worthy governor hurt in his

dearest interests, the fate of America in suspense; here is a man, who, with the utmost insensibility of remorse, stands up and avows himself the author of all. I can compare it only to Zanga, in Dr. Young's "Revenge:" —

> "'Know then 't was — I;
> I forged the letter, I disposed the picture;
> I hated, I despised, and I destroy.'

I ask, my Lords, whether the revengeful temper attributed, by poetic fiction only, to the bloody African is not surpassed by the coolness and apathy of the wily American?"

The picture of Franklin standing unmoved under this torrent of abuse is, I think, the most dramatic incident of his life. It was a victory of glorious endurance; it was the crown of unmerited infamy which was needed to give depth of interest to his successful career. An eyewitness thus described the scene: "Dr. Franklin's face was directed towards me, and I had a full, uninterrupted view of it, and his person, during the whole time in which Mr. Wedderburn spoke. The Doctor was dressed in a full dress suit

of spotted Manchester velvet, and stood *conspicuously erect* without the smallest movement of any part of his body. The muscles of his face had been previously composed, so as to afford a placid, tranquil expression of countenance, and he did not suffer the slightest alteration of it to appear during the continuance of the speech, in which he was so harshly and improperly treated. In short, to quote the words which he employed concerning himself on another occasion, he kept his 'countenance as immovable as if his features had been made of *wood*.'"

Fortunately, to sustain him in these trials, Franklin had a cheerful home and the society of the best men in England. He was living at the old house on Craven Street, where Mrs. Stevenson did all in her power to make him forget that he was an exile. Indeed, were it not that Mrs. Franklin had an unconquerable dread of crossing the water, it is quite possible that our philosopher might have carried his family to England and lived permanently among his new friends; and in estimating the services of

Franklin to America we should never forget to give due credit to his loyal wife who stayed quietly at home, managing his affairs for him in Philadelphia and keeping warm his attachment for his adopted city. Besides the eminent statesmen, such as Pitt and Burke, with whom Franklin's business brought him naturally in contact, he associated much with liberal clergymen, — with Priestley particularly, the discoverer of oxygen, and with the family of the good Bishop of St. Asaph's, at whose house he had almost a second home. To one of the bishop's daughters he sent the inimitable epitaph on the squirrel Mungo which he had given her as a present from America. The influence for good is almost incalculable which Franklin thus exercised by the noble type of American character he displayed to the liberal party in England.

Nor did he ever lose an opportunity to accomplish what he could with the pen. At one time, to lay bare the suicidal policy of the government, he published in a newspaper a satirical squib quite in the vein of

Dean Swift, entitled "Rules for reducing a Great Empire to a Small One." The opening sentences were as follows: "An ancient sage valued himself upon this, that, though he could not fiddle, he knew how to make a great city of a little one. The science that I, a modern simpleton, am about to communicate, is the very reverse;" and with this introduction the author proceeds to give a detailed account of the treatment of the colonies by Parliament.

In another paper Franklin reduced certain arguments of the ministry to the absurd. This was a pretended "Edict of the King of Prussia," in which Frederick was supposed to announce the same sovereignty over England, which had been originally settled by Germans, as Parliament now claimed over America. Speaking of these two papers Franklin says, in a letter to his son: "I sent you one of the first, but could not get enough of the second to spare you one, though my clerk went the next morning to the printer's, and wherever they were sold. . . . I am not suspected as the author, except

by one or two friends; and have heard the latter spoken of in the highest terms, as the keenest and severest piece that has appeared here a long time. Lord Mansfield, I hear, said of it, that it *was very* ABLE *and very* ARTFUL *indeed;* and would do mischief by giving here a bad impression of the measures of government; and in the colonies, by encouraging them in their contumacy. . . . What made it the more noticed here was, that people in reading it were, as the phrase is, *taken in*, till they had got half through it, and imagined it a real edict, to which mistake I suppose the King of Prussia's *character* must have contributed. 'I was down at Lord Le Despencer's, when the post brought that day's papers. Mr. Whitehead was there, too (Paul Whitehead, the author of "Manners"), who runs early through all the papers, and tells the company what he finds remarkable. He had them in another room, and we were chatting in the breakfast parlor, when he came running in to us, out of breath, with the paper in his hand. 'Here!' says he, 'here's news for ye!

Here 's the King of Prussia, claiming a right to this kingdom!' All stared, and I as much as anybody; and he went on to read it. When he had read two or three paragraphs, a gentleman present said, 'Damn his impudence, I dare say we shall hear by next post, that he is upon his march with one hundred thousand men to back this.' Whitehead, who is very shrewd, soon after began to smoke it, and looking in my face, said, 'I 'll be hanged if this is not some of your American jokes upon us.' The reading went on, and ended with abundance of laughing, and a general verdict that it was a fair hit."

After the Privy Council outrage there was very little for Franklin to do. Lord Chatham consulted with him before introducing in Parliament a liberal bill for conciliating the colonies, and Franklin himself was present in the House of Lords when the old statesman, despite the protests of his gout, plead for fairer measures. It may very well be that if these troubles had occurred in Chatham's vigorous days he might

have been able to preserve the integrity of the empire. But now he was crippled by the gout and debarred from active life; and in the interesting "Dialogue between Franklin and the Gout" the philosopher might have retorted upon that exacting lady the mischief she had done his people by laming Pitt. Again Franklin had to stand the bitter denunciation of the Tories, while Lord Sandwich held him up as "one of the bitterest and most mischievous enemies this country had ever known;" but he also had the satisfaction of hearing a noble eulogy of his character pronounced by the great Chatham.

Then, after a good deal of secret negotiation with Lord Howe, Franklin reluctantly abandoned the situation and turned homeward. His last day in London was passed with Dr. Priestley, who has left an interesting record of their conversation. He says of Franklin that "the unity of the British empire in all its parts was a favorite idea of his. He used to compare it to a beautiful china vase, which, if ever broken, could never be put together

again ; and so great an admirer was he of the British constitution that he said he saw no inconvenience from its being extended over a great part of the globe. With these sentiments he left England."

## VI

### MEMBER OF CONGRESS AND ENVOY TO FRANCE

FRANKLIN reached Philadelphia May 5, 1775; and what a home-coming it was! His wife had died, and he was now to live with his daughter Mrs. Bache. The battle of Lexington had been fought while he was at sea, and the whole country was in a ferment of excitement. It was in regard to this battle, it may be remembered, that he uttered one of his famous witticisms. To a critic who accused the Americans of cowardice for firing from behind stone walls, he replied: "I beg to inquire if those same walls had not two sides to them?"

He received the most honorable welcome home, and on the very morning after his arrival was unanimously chosen one of the Pennsylvania delegates to the Continental Congress about to meet in Philadelphia.

Our philosopher, now seventy years old, had come home to rest, but found himself instead in the very vortex of public affairs. He was a member of the Pennsylvania Committee of Safety and a burgess in the Assembly, but later he gave himself entirely to Congress. Afterwards when in Paris he declared that he used to work twelve hours out of the twenty-four on public business. His part in Congress was one of conciliation between conflicting interests, — a rôle he was admirably adapted to fill. Very early he proposed, as he had done at Albany, a union of the thirteen colonies, but the times were not yet ripe for such a measure.

Of the great act of this Congress, the Declaration of Independence, Franklin's share was small, as might be inferred from the nature of the man. He did indeed serve with Jefferson and three others on the committee appointed to draft this document, but, as every one knows, the actual writing of the Declaration was the work of Jefferson. Franklin is chiefly remembered for one or two witticisms in connection with the affair.

"We must be unanimous," said Hancock, when it came to signing the document, "there must be no pulling different ways; we must all hang together." "Yes," replied Franklin, "we must, indeed, all hang together, or, most assuredly, we shall all hang separately."

Over Franklin's manifold occupations we may now pass rapidly, for, though he was connected with almost every prominent transaction of the times, yet he was not a true leader of the revolutionary movement. He was easily the most illustrious man in America, and, since the death of Jonathan Edwards, the most intellectual; but his mind was inquisitive and contemplative rather than aggressive, and rougher hands were now needed at the helm. He acted as postmaster for the colonies, and served on many committees. So, for instance, he went with John Adams and Edward Rutledge to confer with Lord Howe on Staten Island. The embassy, however, came to nothing, as Lord Howe utterly refused to treat with them as envoys of a Congress whose existence he could not acknowledge. It was too late for negotia-

tions. And now we are to see Franklin in a new part.

Of the great leaders of the Revolution each had his peculiar task. There was Samuel Adams in Boston, the herald of division and battle, whose office it was to make clear the mind of the country and to stir up in the people the proper enthusiasm; there was Thomas Jefferson, imbued with French eighteenth-century notions of the rights of man, incapable perhaps of distinguishing between theory and fact, but for that very reason suited to formulate the national Declaration of Independence, a document not rigorously true in philosophy but inimitable as the battle cry of freedom and progress; there was Washington, whose military genius, indomitable will, and noble solidity of character were able to carry the war through to the end; and there was Franklin, too cool-headed ever to have inflamed the hearts of the people with the inspiration of hope and revenge, incapable of uttering political platitudes which could express tersely the national feeling, a lover of peace and without the grim

determination of a soldier, but still able in his own way to serve the state more effectually perhaps than any other man except the great Captain himself. It was absolutely necessary, both for actual help in money and arms and for moral support, that the young nation should receive recognition abroad. To win this recognition was just the task of Franklin. Already he was known personally to many of the leading spirits of England and the Continent. The respect and friendship felt for him by Burke, Fox, Lord Shelburne, Lord Rockingham, did much to augment the power of the opposition in England, and on the Continent the high reputation of Franklin as a philosopher and statesman contributed largely to the general confidence in the ultimate success of the rebellion.

The first really important communication from Europe came to Congress through Dr. Dubourg, of Paris, who wrote a long letter to Franklin, addressing him as "My dear Master," and assuring him of the sympathies of France. Congress hereupon appointed Franklin, Silas Deane, and Arthur Lee com-

missioners to Paris, the two last being already in Europe.

Before departing Franklin got together what money he could, "between three and four thousand pounds," and lent it to Congress; he then sailed with his two grandsons, William Temple Franklin and Benjamin Franklin Bache, reaching Paris December 21, 1776. Considering the dangers and hardships of the voyage this was no light undertaking for a man of his age, and he was in fact physically exhausted when he arrived on the other side.

Franklin came now to reap the fruits of a long and well spent life. His personal fame aided him in a land where philosophers had become the fashion of the day, and as the representative of a people struggling for liberty he was peculiarly dear to the French, who were themselves speculating on such matters and preparing for their own revolution. It is of course easy to exaggerate the influence of sentiment in the case. France was glad to encourage America because the loss of the colonies would weaken the British

Empire, and that was natural; but it is, I think, a mistake not to acknowledge the generous sentiments of the people and even of the grandees of the land. Voltaire and Rousseau had not been preaching in vain; the American Declaration of Independence was quite in the drift of French political ideas. But to awaken trust in a people who dwelt in a far-off wilderness and who were commonly esteemed little better than savages, the presence of such a man as Franklin was of incalculable value.

After a brief interval M. de Chaumont, one of the wealthy Frenchmen of the day, offered Franklin rooms at Passy in his Hôtel de Valentinois, and there our philosopher fixed his abode, living in some style, and spending perhaps about thirteen thousand dollars a year. His popularity was immediate and almost unexampled. The great people of France — philosophers, statesmen, titled noblemen, and fine ladies — thought it an honor to receive the famous American; and it is said that so great was his fame among the common people that the shopkeepers

would run to their doors to see him pass down the street. Innumerable pictures were drawn and medallions cut of his figure, until, as he wrote, his countenance was made "as well known as that of the moon, so that he durst not do anything that would oblige him to run away, as his phiz would discover him wherever he should venture to show it." Parton quotes this interesting account of the commissioners from the Memoirs of Count Sigur: "Nothing could be more striking than . . . the almost rustic apparel, the plain but firm demeanor, the free and direct language, of the envoys, whose antique simplicity of dress and appearance seemed to have introduced within our walls, in the midst of the effeminate and servile refinement of the eighteenth century, some sages contemporary with Plato, or republicans of the age of Cato and of Fabius. This unexpected apparition produced upon us a greater effect in consequence of its novelty, and of its occurring precisely at the period when literature and philosophy had circulated amongst us an unusual desire for reforms,

a disposition to encourage innovations, and the seeds of an ardent attachment to liberty."

But life was not all roseate for Franklin; he and the other envoys had plenty of work to do. Among other things an endless number of foreign officers applied to Franklin for commissions in the American army. Some of these applicants — such as Lafayette and Steuben — were heartily welcome, and really aided the cause; but he was beset by innumerable others who would have been merely a burden on the army. For men of this stamp he drew up and actually used more than once a blank recommendation beginning with these ominous words: "The bearer of this, who is going to America, presses me to give him a letter of recommendation, though I know nothing of him, not even his name. This may seem extraordinary, but I assure you it is not uncommon here," etc. He was also kept busy managing the affairs of the small but active navy, which was largely fitted out in France, and which brought most of its prizes into

French ports. But of all his labors the most difficult and the most important was the raising of money for Congress. Into the details of this exasperating task we cannot here enter. Congress was not wise, and its necessities were desperate, and, despite the generosity of the French court, he had often to employ extreme measures to borrow money on doubtful security or none at all.

To excite interest in favor of the colonies Franklin wrote several papers, whose practical ideas of political liberty were not without effect in guiding the French people on to their own revolution. Even the wit of "the old fox," as he was called in England, appealed strongly to that nation of esprit. So, for instance, when asked if a certain story of American defeat told by Lord Stormont, the British ambassador, was a truth, he answered: "No, monsieur, it is not a truth; it is only a Stormont." And straightway "a stormont" became the polite word for a lie. Again, when told that Howe had taken Philadelphia he retorted: "I beg your pardon, sir, Philadelphia has taken Howe."

But though Franklin could maintain his philosophic calm, and could even joke in the presence of disaster, yet the strain on his nerves was tremendous. I believe that only once in his life was he betrayed into manifesting a strong emotion. Mr. Austin, a messenger from Boston, is coming with important news. All the American commissioners, together with Beaumarchais, are at Passy waiting his arrival. His chaise is heard in the court, and they go out to meet him. But before he even alights Franklin cries out, "Sir, *is* Philadelphia taken?" "Yes, sir," says Austin. It seemed then that all was over. Without a word Franklin clasped his hands and turned toward the house. "But, sir," said Austin, "I have greater news than that. GENERAL BURGOYNE AND HIS WHOLE ARMY ARE PRISONERS OF WAR!" "The news," as one of the party afterwards declared, "was like a sovereign cordial to the dying." How deep the impression upon Franklin was we may judge from his gratitude to the messenger. Mr. Austin relates that often he "would

break from one of those musings in which it was his habit to indulge, and clasping his hands together, exclaim, Oh, Mr. Austin, you brought us glorious news!' "

It was indeed glorious news. The result in France was instantaneous and immense. Franklin and his companions had long wished the court to acknowledge publicly the independence of the United States and to make a treaty of commerce with them. The news of Burgoyne's surrender reached Paris on the 4th of December, 1777; the desired treaty was actually signed on the 6th of February following. Dr. Bancroft, who was present when both parties signed the document, tells us that Franklin on that occasion wore the old suit of Manchester velvet which he had worn on the day of his outrage in the Privy Council, and which had been long laid aside. It was apparently a bit of quaint and secret revenge in which the philosopher indulged himself. But when Dr. Bancroft intimated to Franklin his suspicions in the matter, the philosopher only smiled, and said nothing.

Several weeks later the new treaty was to receive formal recognition, and the American commissioners were to be presented to Louis XVI in their public capacity. Franklin intended to wear the regular court costume at the presentation, but was balked of his desire. The costume did not come in time; and when the perruquier brought his wig it refused to sit on the Doctor's head. Franklin suggested that the wig might be too small. "Monsieur, it is impossible," cried the perruquier, and then, dashing the wig to the floor, exclaimed, "No, Monsieur! — it is not the wig which is too small; it is your head which is too large." At any rate the wig could not be worn, and Franklin appeared in his own gray hair, dressed in black velvet, with white silk stockings, spectacles on nose, and no sword at his side. The king received the envoys courteously, saying: "Gentlemen, I wish the Congress to be assured of my friendship. I beg leave also to observe that I am exceedingly satisfied in particular with your own conduct during your residence in my kingdom;"

and with these words walked out of the apartment. Immediately Lord Stormont, the British ambassador, left Paris; and a few days later M. Gérard, the first minister of France to this country, sailed for America.

Franklin had met the king; he had now to meet a greater and more famous man than Louis, — the only man living whose fame was equal to his own. Voltaire, eighty-four years old, feeble in body but with intellect unconquered, had just come to Paris after his long exile to hear the plaudits of his countrymen, and to die. The American envoys asked permission to wait upon the great man, and were received by Voltaire lying on his couch. He quoted a few lines from Thomson's "Ode to Liberty," and then began to talk with Franklin in English; but his niece, not understanding that language, begged them to speak in French. Whereupon Voltaire replied: "I beg your pardon. I have for a moment yielded to the vanity of showing that I can speak in the language of a Franklin." When Dr. Franklin presented

his grandson, the old philosopher pronounced over his head only these words: "*God and Liberty!*" All who were present shed tears.

John Adams tells the story of a more public meeting between the two men at the Academy of Sciences: "Voltaire and Franklin were both present, and there presently arose a general cry that M. Voltaire and M. Franklin should be introduced to each other. This was done, and they bowed and spoke to each other. This was no satisfaction; there must be something more. Neither of our philosophers seemed to divine what was wished or expected. They, however, took each other by the hand; but this was not enough. The clamor continued until the exclamation came out, 'Il faut s'embrasser à la Française!'[1] The two aged actors upon this great theatre of philosophy and frivolity then embraced each other by hugging one another in their arms and kissing each other's cheeks, and then the tumult subsided. And the cry immediately spread

[1] They must embrace like Frenchmen.

throughout the kingdom, and I suppose over all Europe, 'Qu'il était charmant de voir embrasser Solon et Sophocle!'"[1]

The mention of John Adams recalls us to the most disagreeable part of Franklin's experience. During all his sojourn in France he was subject to continual and annoying interference from his colleagues. Before his arrival in Paris, Silas Deane had entered for Congress into semi-commercial relations with the French government through the eccentric and industrious Beaumarchais. Franklin was content to leave these affairs to him, and did not at the time even know their real nature. But with Arthur Lee it was different. Of all characters in American history Lee is almost the hardest to endure. He was patriotic, and in a way honest, but meddlesome, suspicious, vain, and quarrelsome to an incredible degree. He immediately made up his mind that Deane was peculating, and never ceased writing accusatory letters until Congress recalled the unfortu-

[1] How charming it was to see Solon and Sophocles embrace.

nate envoy. All this time he was also acting toward Franklin in a manner which can only be described as insane. He fumed at Franklin's easy way of conducting business; his vanity suffered indescribable tortures at every mark of respect paid to his distinguished colleague; he suspected him of treason and every other crime; and with his partisans (whose names we need not here mention) he wrote voluble letters of incrimination to Congress. When Silas Deane was recalled, John Adams was sent over to take his place, and for a while Franklin received support from his new colleague, — for Adams, with all his faults, was at least single-hearted in his patriotism. But their characters were too widely different for them to work easily together in harness. Adams's vanity was almost as great as Arthur Lee's. The homage paid to Franklin drove him almost into a frenzy of rage, both because he thought himself overlooked and because such homage savored of aristocracy. In Franklin's catalogue of the virtues there were two which he could not claim to have at-

tained, — chastity and orderliness ; and these two weaknesses now rose to exact their penalty. Adams could not believe that a man who had been lax with women could be honest in anything else ; Adams was the spirit of petty orderliness, and Franklin's easy ways seemed to him the destruction of all business. At last Congress came to the rescue, and for once acted sensibly: Lee and Adams were recalled, and Franklin was left as sole plenipotentiary in Paris.

With other Americans Franklin's relationship was of a pleasanter sort. To the American navy and privateers Franklin was the American government ; and, though he was often annoyed by the unreasonable conduct of importunate captains, yet he also shared in the glory of their deeds. John Paul Jones was one of the many forced to endure Arthur Lee's impertinences, and had it not been for Franklin's aid and friendship our navy would have lost the honor of that name. At one time Paul Jones was in Paris with no ship to command, and though he tried every channel to obtain a vessel

from the French court, was always put off. At last, as he was reading a French translation of Poor Richard's Almanac, his eye was struck by this sentence: "If you would have your business done, go; if not, send." Without delay he went himself to Versailles, and obtained an order to purchase an old ship of forty guns. This good vessel he christened Le Bon Homme Richard, which is French for Poor Richard, and the story of how she beat the Serapis need not here be retold.

Through all these difficulties in France, as before in England, Franklin found consolation and amusement in the intellectual society of a great capital. And what a society this was! The very list of names of Franklin's friends is an inspiration. With the scientists of the day he continued to discuss philosophic questions; and with the great ladies of society he could find relaxation from his graver cares. Chess still absorbed more of his time than his conscience approved, and there are several well known stories of him in connection with that game. Once when

playing with the old Duchess of Bourbon, the lady happened to put her king into prize, and the Doctor took it. "Ah," says she, "we do not take kings so." "We do in America," said the Doctor; and this pleasant joke he seems to have repeated several times in different forms. To Madame Brillon, a wealthy and amiable lady of the neighborhood, he wrote a number of those clever sketches which might well find a place in the "Spectator," — such as The Ephemera, The Petition of the Left Hand, The Whistle, The Dialogue between Franklin and the Gout, and others almost as well known.

One of his best friends was Madame Helvetius, widow of the celebrated philosopher, and it was to her he wrote his famous dream ending with the words, "Let us avenge ourselves." We must at least find space for Mrs. Adams's curious account of that lady: "She entered the room with a careless, jaunty air; upon seeing ladies who were strangers to her, she bawled out, 'Ah! mon Dieu, where is Franklin? Why did you not tell me there were ladies here?'

You must suppose her speaking all this in French. 'How I look!' said she, taking hold of a chemise made of tiffany, which she had on over a blue lute-string, and which looked as much upon the decay as her beauty, for she was once a handsome woman; her hair was frizzled; over it she had a small straw hat, with a dirty gauze half-handkerchief round it, and a bit of dirtier gauze than ever my maid wore was bowed on behind. She had a black gauze scarf thrown over her shoulders. She ran out of the room; when she returned, the Doctor entered at one door, she at the other; upon which she ran forward to him, caught him by the hand, 'Hélas! Franklin;' then gave him a double kiss, one upon each cheek, and another upon his forehead. When we went into the room to dine, she was placed between the Doctor and Mr. Adams. She carried the chief of the conversation at dinner, frequently locking her hand into the Doctor's, and sometimes spreading her arms upon the backs of both the gentlemen's chairs, then throwing her arm carelessly upon the Doctor's neck."

Another house to which Franklin was welcome was that of the Countess d'Houdetot celebrated for her part in the life of Rousseau. It was at her château that Franklin had to undergo the ordeal of such a glorification as must have tried his philosophic nerves to the uttermost. The chronicler of the occasion declares that "the venerable sage, with his gray hair flowing down upon his shoulders, his staff in hand, the spectacles of wisdom on his nose, was the perfect picture of true philosophy and virtue." But the "sage" must have found his virtue a burden on that day. He was escorted through the grounds; wine was poured out freely; music was played, and the company in turn celebrated the guest in stanzas which were none the less fulsome because they were true. The ceremony closed with the planting of a Virginia locust by the Doctor.

The surrender of Burgoyne in 1777 had brought about the treaty with France; the surrender of Cornwallis at Yorktown, four years later, was the beginning of peace and the cause of the treaty with England.

What effect the news of Cornwallis's defeat had in England; how Lord North, the Prime Minister, received the message "as he would have taken a ball in his breast," walking wildly up and down the room, tossing his arms, and crying out, "Oh God! it is all over! it is all over!" — all this is known to everybody.

The diplomacy which now passed between the belligerent parties is a most complicated chapter of history. Franklin, Jay, and Adams were appointed by Congress to treat with England concerning peace, with instructions to consult the French government in every measure. The first difficulty was one of form. England was ready to sign a treaty of peace and acknowledge the independence of the colonies; but the envoy sent to Paris for this purpose was empowered to treat only with commissioners of the "colonies or plantations," and Jay and Adams felt incensed that the United States did not receive recognition by name. Franklin regarded the matter as a mere formality and was eager

to push on the proceedings; but his colleagues were obdurate, and after some delay England made the required recognition. Three important points had then to be settled: 1. Whether the Americans should be allowed to fish on the New Foundland banks; 2. Whether the western boundary should extend to the Mississippi River; 3. Whether the United States government should reimburse the losses of the Tories.

Adams, who as a Bostonian understood the importance of the first measure, insisted stubbornly that England should cede this point, and finally won the day. That the United States were not confined to a strip of land along the seacoast was chiefly due to Jay. And here a new complication came in. Jay had from the first suspected that France was playing a double game, and convincing evidence of duplicity now fell into his hands. To obtain concessions for herself, France was secretly encouraging England to refuse the American claims on the New Foundland fishing banks and on the territory lying between the Alleghanies and the Mississippi.

Jay thereupon insisted that the American envoys should treat secretly with England without consulting the French court, and Adams sided with him. Franklin was at first much averse to this mode of procedure, both because Congress had distinctly commanded them to act in concert with Versailles, and because he could not believe in the treachery of his French friends. When, however, Jay laid the matter clearly before him he gave up the point, and the negotiations proceeded. England acknowledged the American right to the western territory, but was more obstinate in regard to the Tory indemnification. Franklin was willing to grant this if England in return would cede Canada to the American union, and for a time the question was debated in this form. Finally a compromise was adopted, Congress promising to recommend to the state legislatures "to restore the estates, rights, and properties of real British subjects," — which was of course a concession in words only, as Congress had no authority to enforce such a recommendation. The preliminary treaty between Eng-

land and America was signed November 30, 1782, and Franklin had at once to appease the wrath of the French government which felt it had been duped. With consummate skill he accomplished this task, and all the vexing questions at issue were settled by the signing, on September 3, 1783, of separate definitive treaties between the three hostile powers.

Franklin's great work was done. He had before this urged Congress to release him from his heavy duties, and at last — in 1785, after he had assisted in making treaties with the other powers of Europe — his resignation was accepted, and he was free to return home. Thomas Jefferson came over to Paris as plenipotentiary in his stead. When asked if he replaced Dr. Franklin, Jefferson used to reply: "I *succeed*. No one can *replace* him."

Franklin returned to Philadelphia laden with years and honors; yet still his country could not let him repose. For three successive years he was elected President of Pennsylvania; but the labors entailed were not

severe, and the old man found time for amusement and quiet study. We have a beautiful picture of his life at home with his daughter and her family in one of his letters of the time : " The companions of my youth are indeed almost all departed; but I find an agreeable society among their children and grandchildren. I have public business enough to preserve me from ennui, and private amusement besides in conversation, books, my garden, and cribbage. Considering our well-furnished, plentiful market as the best of gardens, I am turning mine, in the midst of which my house stands, into grass plots and gravel walks, with trees and flowering shrubs. Cards we sometimes play here in long winter evenings; but it is as they play at chess, — not for money, but for honor, or the pleasure of beating one another. This will not be quite a novelty to you, as you may remember we played together in that manner during the winter at Passy. I have indeed now and then a little compunction in reflecting that I spend time so idly. But another reflection comes to relieve me,

whispering: '*You know that the soul is immortal. Why, then, should you be such a niggard of a little time, when you have a whole eternity before you?*' So, being easily convinced, and, like other reasonable creatures, satisfied with a small reason when it is in favor of doing what I have a mind to, I shuffle the cards again, and begin another game." Yet the old man could not but feel lonely at times in the new society growing up about him. He says pathetically in another letter: "I seem to have intruded myself into the company of posterity, when I ought to have been abed and asleep."

In 1787 the constitutional convention met in Philadelphia, and it was a fitting thing that the statesman and philosopher should live to aid in framing laws by which his country is still governed. He was now too weak to stand long, so that his speeches on various questions had to be read out by a friend. His work in the convention was altogether subordinate to that of Madison and one or two other leading spir-

its; but his part in reconciling various factious elements in the convention was of the greatest importance. When at last the deadlock came between the smaller and the larger States on the question of representation in the legislature, it was Franklin who saved the day by a suggestion which led to the famous compromise, making the Senate represent the individual States, while the lower house is proportioned to population. Washington presided over the assembly; and we are told that while "the last members were signing, Dr. Franklin, looking towards the president's chair, at the back of which a rising sun happened to be painted, observed to a few members near him that painters had found it difficult to distinguish in their art a rising from a setting sun. 'I have,' said he, 'often and often in the course of the session and the vicissitudes of my hopes and fears as to its issue looked at that behind the president without being able to tell whether it was rising or setting; but now at length I have the happiness to know that it is a rising, and not a setting sun.'"

It was, however, the setting sun for Franklin. The few years that remained to him were peaceful and noble; but his old maladies increased on him, until at the last he was confined to his bed. Yet through it all he showed the same untiring energy. He wrote against the study of the classics, against the abuse of the liberty of the press, and from his very deathbed sent out a stinging letter against slavery. The end was come: at eleven o'clock at night, April 17, 1790, he passed away. Philadelphia knew that she had lost her most distinguished citizen, and he was followed to the grave by a procession including all that was honorable in the city.

In closing this brief Life of a great and good man we cannot do better than quote the words sent to him by America's greatest citizen: "If to be venerated for benevolence, if to be admired for talent, if to be esteemed for patriotism, if to be beloved for philanthropy, can gratify the human mind, you must have the pleasing consolation to know that you have not lived in vain. And I flat-

ter myself that it will not be ranked among the least grateful occurrences of your life to be assured that so long as I retain my memory you will be recollected with respect, veneration, and affection by your sincere friend." To receive such praise from Washington is sufficient answer to all the petty cavils that have been raised against the memory of Benjamin Franklin.

14 DAY USE
RETURN TO DESK FROM WHICH BORROWED

# LOAN DEPT.

This book is due on the last date stamped below, or on the date to which renewed.
Renewed books are subject to immediate recall.

25Jun'59 MR
REC'D LD
JUL 9 1959
1Nov'60JC
REC'D LD
OCT 21 1960
2Dec'60LO
REC'D LD
DEC 1 1960
15Jan'61RM
JAN 12 1961

7 Jul'61BS
REC'D LD
JUL 6 1961
19Nov'63SC
REC'D LD
NOV 20'63-12 M
13Dec'63PS
REC'D LD
DEC 12'63-2 PM
DEC 16 1966 77
REC'D LD
DEC 8'66-8 AM

LD 21A–50m-4,'59
(A1724s10)476B

General Library
University of California
Berkeley

E302
.F8M7
227629